

THE ARCHIVE



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Regiment of the line, that he is not to drink any more, and to behave better. It seems that the cross was given him because he is a brave man. But it must not be taken from him because he is too fond of wine. Make him realize, however, that he is wrong in putting himself into such a condition as to disgrace the decoration he wears.'¹⁰

The Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour proposes to disgrace a member of the order, a sergeant in a company of the reserve, because he has become dangerous by reason of his insubordination and bad conduct :

'The Grand Chancellor,' answers Napoleon, 'will write and warn him to behave better in future.'¹¹

Monsieur de Lacépède announced that he was sending back to France, under escort, a soldier decorated for a fine action, but whose insubordination had caused his expulsion from the regiment to which he belonged.

'Let him come in liberty to Paris,' is the answer, 'where the Grand Chancellor shall interrogate him. As the decoration was given to him for a fine action I do not wish to take it from him. Try to conciliate the interests of this brave fellow with good discipline.'¹²

¹⁰ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xv., p. 273, No. 12,660, May 27, 1807.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 464, No. 12,971, August 2, 1807.

¹² *Ibid.*, t. xvi., p. 304, No. 13,522, February 3, 1808.

‘You have in the Light Cavalry a man named Galuppo, from Chiavari, who has written to his father that he is badly used in the Guard, that they give him soup and black bread fit for dogs, and at night cakes made of horse-beans.’

Here, undoubtedly, is grave reason for repression, not brutal, but such as is indispensable to good order and discipline. Did Napoleon call down the wrath of the Colonel on this man, or did he merely direct him to punish him forthwith, according to rule? Neither. He contented himself by concluding his letter with these words: ‘See what that young man wants.’

A soldier had been dismissed from his regiment for misconduct.

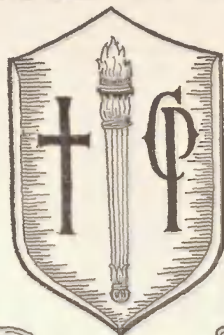
‘I have received,’ writes Napoleon, ‘your report of the 11th relative to Gautier of the 16th Light Infantry. I do not doubt that he will keep the promise he has made you. Restore him to his regiment, in which I hope he will soon earn promotion. Write in this sense to the Colonel.’¹³

As we must limit our examples, we will relate, in proof of the generous instincts of Napoleon towards soldiers of every kind, a fact concerning private soldiers, but this time English, and not French. We will leave the Emperor to tell the story in his own language :

¹³ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xvii., p. 140, No. 13,903, May 16, 1808.



COLLEGE
OF THE PACIFIC

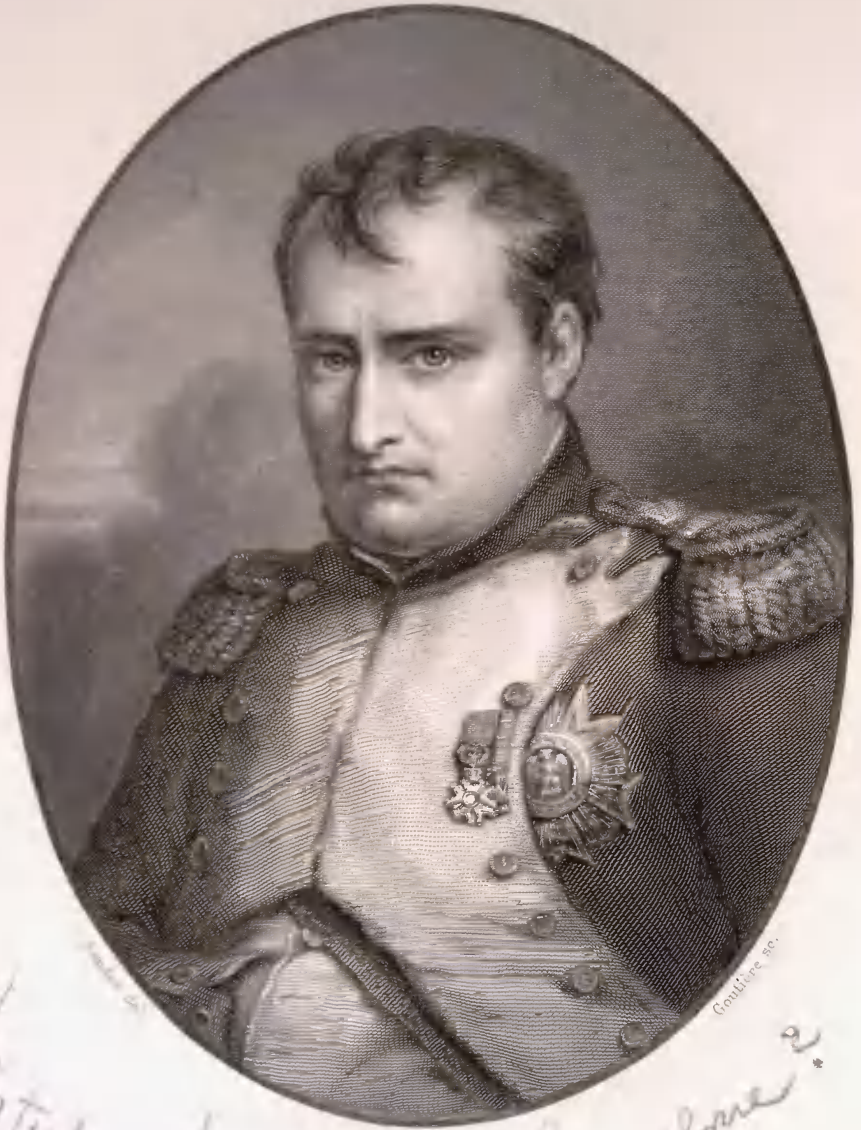


GIFT OF

J. W. Mailliard, Jr.

THE
PRIVATE LIFE OF NAPOLEON

A. J. Rosslyn
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What has he done?

NAPOLEON

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THE PRIVATE LIFE
OF
NAPOLEON

BY
ARTHUR LÉVY

Translated by
STEPHEN LOUIS SIMEON

TRANSLATOR OF "THE LIFE OF NAPOLEON THE GREAT," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. II.

SECOND EDITION

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From the British Library

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BOOK III. (*continued*)

THE FAMILY

THE
PRIVATE LIFE OF NAPOLEON

VII.

Eliza Bonaparte : Marriage with Felix Bacciochi—Her Pride
—The Duchies—Napoleon avoids Discussion—No Satisfaction for the Emperor—Court of Florence—Caricature of the Imperial Court.

IN the first part of this work we saw Napoleon, in 1792, while a Captain of artillery, and struggling with the greatest difficulties on his own account, looking after his sister Eliza, then a girl in the Royal School at Saint-Cyr ; we saw him withdraw her from that establishment, threatened by revolutionary excesses, lodge her with himself at the Hôtel de Metz, Rue du Mail, and finally reconduct her to Ajaccio as soon as he had concluded the steps necessary in his own unsafe situation.

We next meet Eliza in 1796, with her mother and Pauline, her younger sister, at the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Italy. On May 5, 1797, she married Felix Bacciochi, son of an honourable Corsican family.

This marriage did not give much satisfaction to Napoleon,¹ who would probably have preferred to this 'super-excellent Bacciochi,' as Lucien Bonaparte calls him,² a man somewhat less endowed with intellectual faculties.³ But at that time the *demoiselles* Bonaparte were not much sought after, and the family had not the right to show themselves difficult to please.

As soon as the Empire was proclaimed, he was besieged by his sisters, who wanted to govern kingdoms.

'It was on their part,' says Mdlle. Avrillon, 'a veritable persecution.'⁴

The Emperor, who could not long withstand the entreaties of his family, gave Eliza, in 1804, the sovereign principality of Piombino, afterwards reinforced by that of Lucca. Then, as his sister's ambition was still unsatisfied, he granted to her, in 1808, the grand-duchy of Tuscany.

If we may judge from Napoleon's correspondence, he seemed to have carefully avoided all discussion with Eliza, whose temper, 'unpleasantly sharp,'⁵ was not accommodating.

¹ Foissy, 'La Famille Bonaparte depuis 1264 jusqu'à nos Jours,' Paris, 1830, p. 96.

² Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte,' t. i., p. 54.

³ Prince Metternich, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 311.

⁴ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 332.

⁵ Duchesse d'Abrantès, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 77.

The management of these duchies, whether good or bad, could not be of great consequence to the fate of the Empire ; so Napoleon allowed free scope to all the extravagances of her haughty character, 'desiring magnificence and military splendour, and modelling herself upon the habits of her brother.'⁶

He shut his eyes to her love-affairs, some of which created great scandal.⁷ Under the guidance of Monsieur Fontanes, to whom she could refuse nothing, she worked at making a renown for herself, out of which she paid her three trumpeters, who were called the Chevalier de Boufflers, La Harpe, and Chateaubriand.⁸

Nor did Eliza supply Napoleon with elements calculated to increase the splendour of his throne. In the days of his magnificence he had to endure the daily annoyances caused him by the parody of the Imperial Government that was being played in Florence, and the deplorable reputation of his sister also gave him a blow. When his reverses came in 1813, he had the sorrow of seeing Eliza negotiating with Murat, whose position seemed to her to offer more chances of success than Napoleon's.⁹

⁶ Fouché, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 255.

⁷ Mdle. Avrillon, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 332.

⁸ Thibaudeau, 'Histoire de Napoléon,' t. i., p. 169.

⁹ Fouché, t. ii., p. 259.

VIII.

Pauline Bonaparte : The 'Queen of Trinkets'—Canova's Statue
 —Charges of Incest—Absurd Documents—*Le Roi s'amuse*
 —Beugnot's Silence—No Special Favour for Pauline—
 Marriage with Prince Borghèse—Napoleon a Severe
 Mentor—Consultation with Dr. Hallé—Devotion of
 Pauline for the Emperor.

AFTER the sour and haughty figure of Eliza, after the woman who liked reviews and military attitudes, after this ambitious, selfish, and ungrateful character, we have before us the pale and languishing figure of Pauline Bonaparte, a woman to the very tips of her pink finger-nails, the most beautiful of the beautiful women of her time, whose one anxiety was to maintain her title of 'queen of trinkets,'¹ a supreme distinction in her eyes, earned for her by her elegance and coquetry.

Her resplendent beauty, unrivalled in Europe, has been immortalized by the chisel of Canova, who has bequeathed to our admiration the model

¹ Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte,' t. iii., p. 104.

of the incomparable figure of the Princess, reposing, scantily clad, upon an antique bed. The daring caprice which induced Pauline to adopt in the sculptor's studio this improper albeit very classical pose gives us the keynote to her whole character. Infatuated about herself, greedy of homage, intolerant of any restraint in her slightest fancies, such was she who in her childhood was called 'pretty Paulette.'

Because the Emperor bore with his sister's dissolute courses without checking them roughly, he has been ignobly defamed. He was charged with maintaining an illicit connection with his own sister, an abominable and outrageous accusation, fostered in the slime of traitors, disappointed courtiers and loose women. This atrocious calumny, which Frenchmen have taken pleasure in repeating, has been repelled, let us hasten to say, by Napoleon's worst enemies, the English.

'Men have even gone the length,' says Scott, 'of imputing to Pauline an intrigue with her own brother. We reject, without weighing it, an accusation too hideous even to be mentioned, and which ought never to be breathed without the clearest proofs in support of it.'²

It is not our intention to write an apology for Napoleon. We are seeking for the real

² Sir Walter Scott, 'Life of Napoleon Bonaparte,' vol. v., p. 291.

tendencies of the man. We wish to show him as he was. Had he been guilty of such an atrocity we should not have hesitated an instant in examining into this extraordinary aberration in a man whom we have seen to possess the highest domestic virtues. We should have examined the fact with the same care as that with which we have tried to bring into clear relief his good points.

But, happily for the honour of the Sovereign who governed France for fifteen years, happily, also, for the dignity of the nation, in all the documents now existing we can find absolutely nothing but the bald affirmation of this revolting crime. No well-founded allegation has come into our hands, no sort of proof has been revealed to us.

Some letters have no doubt been published which, their editors tell us, were written by Pauline to two colonels, her lovers, during her stay in the Island of Elba, in 1814. The object of these letters is to let one of them know that 'Buonaparte' (*sic*) 'is too jealous to come any more'; and the other 'that he must hasten to come, because Buonaparte only sees her during the day, and that he, the Colonel, could spend all the evening with her.'

'In these letters,' adds Monsieur Jung, 'the charming Pauline does not hesitate to describe her "august brother" as a "rotten old man" (*vieux pourri*), nor to ask this complaisant (!) Colonel

to bring her some drugs then very much in fashion.³

Monsieur d'Hérisson and Monsieur Marcelin Pelet have not disdained to give further particulars respecting this drug.⁴

There is the ignoble calumny in all its crudity, we might almost say in all its simplicity. It will be sufficient for us, we think, to examine it by the light of common-sense, in order to arrive at the conclusion that this monstrous accusation, contained in documents of very doubtful authenticity, is a defiance to the credulity of any reader.

The letters supposed to be written by Pauline exist, as a matter of fact, nowhere. Nobody attempts to give traces of them, nor dates, nor the names of the recipients, not even their initials, much less their addresses. Monsieur Jung takes his stand upon reports made by Monsieur de Jaucourt, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Monsieur de Talleyrand. We have the right to ask whence, in default of Pauline's original letters, Monsieur de Jaucourt obtained the foundation for his statements. The answer is simple.

This episode of the Island of Elba ought by rights to be called, not 'the Emperor enjoying himself' (*l'Empereur s'amuse*), but, rather, 'the

³ 'Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte,' t. iii, p. 202.

⁴ D'Hérisson, 'Le Cabinet Noir,' p. 131; Pelet, 'Napoléon à l'Île d'Elbe,' p. 43.

King enjoying himself' (*Le Roi s'amuse*), because these sensational stories were all invented for the delectation of Louis XVIII.

The proof of our statement may be found emanating from the pen of those very people who propagated these scandalous stories.

'Beugnot,' says Mounier, in his memoirs published by Monsieur d'Hérisson, 'who had charge of the police immediately after the Empire, busied himself about those matters simply to amuse the King,' and the same author adds :

'The constant preoccupation about all that concerned Bonaparte contained also a strong spice of egoistical curiosity, and every time that his police unearthed for the King an intrigue that was not to the honour of his powerful predecessor, he experienced genuine satisfaction.'⁵

When monarchs take pleasure in scandalous stories, courtiers will not hesitate to relate them. The countless infamies published against Napoleon during the reign of Louis XVIII. prove that that monarch was not particular as to the quality of the amusement provided for him.

Amongst these libels must be placed the pretended letters of Pauline, whose authenticity no one can prove. De Jaucourt speaks of letters, but he never says that he has seen them.⁶

⁵ D'Hérisson, 'Le Cabinet Noir,' p. 131.

⁶ Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien,' t. iii., p. 202.

Neither does Mounier ever say that they have come under his eyes; he only insinuates that 'Beugnot had told him that he had intercepted some letters.'⁷

It may not be amiss to remind our readers that Beugnot published some memoirs in which he did not deal too gently with the Empire, and wherein he, who is supposed to have been the discoverer of these most important documents, makes not the slightest allusion to them. He devotes, however, a good deal of space to Princess Pauline, and here is his description of her :

'This Princess is the type of French beauty—that is to say, of beauty completed by gracefulness and animated by gaiety. I wish that her statue could be confided to the genius of Canova, and that, after passing under his marvellous chisel, it could be reproduced in a thousand places, and take, amongst modern statues, the place occupied amongst ancient ones by the Venus of Florence.

'The Princess has natural qualities of mind and just as much learning as is necessary not to overshadow her more valuable charms. She skims lightly over all the pleasures suitable to her age, her beauty, and her happy independence. She has gone to Aix-la-Chapelle for two reasons, one respectable and the other important: her

⁷ D'Hérisson, p. 131.

health, and the duty of keeping her mother company ; but in the course of her journey she has sown desolation in some places, and hope in more than one other. She has been followed to Aix, and does not know whether she will consider it prudent to notice the fact. She has found there more than one adorer, whose incense, so far, has produced nothing but smoke.

‘She treats this subject with admirable skill. She might compare with Atalanta, speeding over the flowers and leaving no trace of her steps. When I see her, I say to myself, with bitter regret : “Happy are they who are still in that beautiful period of life, in which they are permitted to lay their vows at the foot of such altars !”’⁸

The spirit in which this portrait is drawn cannot fail to have evoked in Beugnot’s mind a recollection of the piquant revelations whose paternity is attributed to him by Mounier, the more so as Beugnot gives a long account of his functions as Director-General of the Police, and says nothing whatever about the amazing letters from the Island of Elba. The only mention he makes of Mounier’s name is to notify ‘the hatred that he bore to Napoleon in 1814.’⁹

We may, therefore, repel with contempt this insidious gossip, invented either by personal ani-

⁸ Count Beugnot, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 419.

⁹ *Ibid.*, t. ii., p. 279.

mosity or by the vile desire to please a King not too scrupulous in the choice of his recreations.

The work of calumny, even when unclean, when devoid of all foundation, is so pernicious that it is not enough to establish the improbability of an accusation. We must carry the inquiry beyond refutation, and prove, to the confusion of the sycophants bent upon soiling his memory, that, far from entertaining the abominable instincts attributed to him, Napoleon always behaved to Pauline as a severe adviser, and not as a man in love with her charms.

At what period do they date the love of Napoleon for his sister Pauline? It was probably not when the family was either in Corsica or at Marseilles, for at that time Pauline was thirteen at the outside. She was not with her brother again till the campaign in Italy, at Montebello and Passeriano, and at that moment Bonaparte, completely given up to his passion for Joséphine, was not likely to have other amorous ideas in his head. In any case, he had none for Pauline, whom he married, when barely seventeen, to Leclerc, an officer of his staff.¹⁰

Nor can we place this fraternal romance in the following year; Napoleon was in Egypt, Pauline was not. Neither does the period of the 18th Brumaire, quickly followed by the Marengo

¹⁰ Foissy, '*La Famille Bonaparte depuis 1264*,' p. 106.

campaign, seem a favourable date. If we consider the attitude of Napoleon towards his sister in 1802, it will be admitted that at that time she had no ascendancy over him. It was then that Leclerc was making his preparations for the expedition to San Domingo, of which he had been appointed Commander-in-Chief. Expatriation and a farewell to the scene of her worldly triumphs were not at all to the taste of Pauline. Notwithstanding his sister's entreaties, Napoleon insisted upon her accompanying her husband, as is proved by the memoirs of Lucien Bonaparte, confirmed by those of Constant.¹¹ The determination of Napoleon not to allow himself to be moved by his sister's tears is accentuated by Fouché, who says :¹²

‘As she refused to follow Leclerc to San Domingo, she was transported in a litter, by order of Napoleon, on board the flagship.’

If we add, according to a witness who cannot be suspected of partiality, that, ‘by a spiteful arrangement of her powerful brother, she made this long voyage in company with her husband and her ex-Romeo, the handsome Fréron,’¹³ it will be granted that that was hardly the act of a lover.

¹¹ Constant, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 165; Jung, ‘Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte,’ t. ii., p. 414.

¹² ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 44.

¹³ Jung, ‘Mémoires de Lucien,’ t. ii., p. 414.

In 1803, Pauline, now widow of General Leclerc, who had died of yellow fever, returned from San Domingo.

'The First Consul, who knew what she was, and did not wish that her mourning should be spent in an unseemly manner, put her under the charge of his brother Joseph and his excellent wife. She lodged in the house in the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré that Joseph then occupied.'¹⁴

That is not the sort of dwelling that lovers choose for their mistresses.

When Pauline's mourning ended, Napoleon, who gave her a jointure of 500,000 francs (£20,000), arranged the marriage between her and Prince Camillo Borghèse.¹⁵

This marriage seemed as if it ought to be pleasing to Pauline in every respect.¹⁶ Borghèse was a very handsome man, with an immense fortune, diamonds that eclipsed any in Paris, and, finally, what until then had been unknown in the family of the First Consul, the title of Prince. It was no small gratification to Pauline to be announced as Princess Borghèse, while her sister-in-law, Joséphine, was as yet only Madame Bonaparte. Pauline, however, was, if possible, still

¹⁴ Duchesse d'Abrantès, 'Mémoires,' t. v., p. 153.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, t. v., p. 164.

¹⁶ Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien,' t. ii., pp. 415, 416.

more proud of owning finer diamonds than the wife of the First Consul. After the marriage the Princess went to Rome with her husband.

If, from this moment, Napoleon sometimes quitted his position as brother, it was to take up that of father. The following letter will prove this :

‘Madame and dear sister, I have learned with regret that you have not the tact to conform to the manners and customs of Rome, that you show contempt for its inhabitants, and that your eyes are constantly turned towards Paris. Although I am occupied with much business, I wish to make known my desires to you, hoping that you will conform to them.

‘Love your husband and your family, be obliging, accommodate yourself to Roman habits, and keep well in mind that if, at your age, you hearken to bad advice, you must no longer count upon me.

‘As for Paris, you may be certain that you will never find any support here, and that I will never receive you without your husband. If you quarrel with him, the fault will be yours, and France will be forbidden you. You will lose your happiness and my affection.’¹⁷

This letter was delivered to Pauline by Cardinal

¹⁷ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. ix., p. 319, No. 7,674, April 6, 1806.

Fesch, who had received by the same courier special instructions couched in the following terms :

‘ M. le Cardinal, I send you a letter for Madame Paulette . . . it is very annoying to me to think that Madame Borghèse is so little aware of how important it is for her welfare to make herself thoroughly at home at Rome, and to join in the esteem of the citizens of that important city, a reward which could not fail to be gratifying to a heart so good as hers. Once more I make known my wishes in the clearest and most emphatic way. I hope she will conform to them ; besides, the arrival of her mother will give her an adviser equally natural and valuable. Tell her, then, on my part, that already she is not so beautiful as she was, that she will become much less so in a few years ; but that, all her life, she may be good, and worthy of esteem. . . . She ought to study to please the family of her husband and all the Roman nobility, and to give a tone to society worthy of the rank she occupies, discountenancing those bad manners which are put down by people of good breeding, even in the most frivolous circles of the capital.’

Can anyone believe that such sentiments, expressed by a brother to a sister, could be the forerunners of culpable relations ? And one must insist on the point that these papers, so appropriately corroborating the evidence of contem-

poraries, were not invented to meet the necessities of the case. They are authentic originals, still in existence, easily consulted. Can we say as much of the pretended revelations of those who circulate the disgraceful calumny?

In fact, the whole life of Napoleon contradicts the hideous depravity with which they endeavour to charge him. Not only were his sentiments opposed to such vileness, but all his acts attest the untruthfulness of his calumniators.

Had the relations between this omnipotent Sovereign and his sister been in the smallest degree suspicious, he would not have refused her either honours or riches. Now, Pauline, and this is not unimportant, was, of all Napoleon's sisters, the one who had the least cause to praise his generosity.

While Caroline became Queen of Naples, and Eliza Grand-Duchess of Tuscany, Pauline all her life remained titular Princess of the little principality of Guastalla. She was perhaps the only one who ever had a refusal from the Emperor.

According to M. de Metternich, 'his sisters got from him whatever they wanted.'¹⁸

Pauline was even refused permission to send a certain M. Michelot to Paris to look after her affairs in that capital.¹⁹

¹⁸ Prince Metternich's 'Memoirs,' t. i., p. 286.

¹⁹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xv., p. 11, April 2, 1807.

Nothing is so singular as that this charge of incest should have been made against Napoleon. The whole of the evidence of eye-witnesses combines to demolish it. 'The Princess Pauline,' says Mdlle. Avrillon,²⁰ surrounded herself as much as she could with pretty women, and those who might be pleasing to the eye of the Emperor.' Less guarded, Girardin says in his journal:²¹ 'I hear of a new La Vallière who has captivated our monarch, a young Italian girl attached to the suite of the Princess Borghèse, who is, I am told, small and blonde.'

Other evidence on the subject of the accusation and its consequences will be found in Colonel Jung's 'Memoirs of Lucien,'²² and there is also extant in the collection of M. Henri Gautier-Villars an autograph letter of Dr. Hallé, which has not hitherto been published, and which throws considerable light upon the vagaries of the Princess Pauline.

In 1810 Pauline received orders from the Emperor to quit the Court immediately, on account of a want of respect for Maria-Louisa.²³

Her character was described by Arnault in 1796:²⁴

²⁰ In her 'Memoirs,' t. ii., p. 139.

²¹ 'Journal et Souvenirs,' t. ii., p. 339.

²² T. iii., p. 202.

²³ Constant, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 170; Fouché, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 46.

²⁴ 'Mémoires d'un Sexagénaire,' t. iii., p. 34.

'She was the prettiest creature ever seen, and the wildest ever imagined. She had no more dignity than a school-girl, talked unceasingly, laughed at everything and nothing, imitated the gravest personages, and thrust out her tongue at her sister-in-law when she was not looking.'

It was, indeed, the same Pauline who, in 1810, made a vulgar gesture with her fingers behind the back of Maria-Louisa. Napoleon chanced to see in a looking-glass what she was doing, and his anger may be conceived.

He had beside him an Archduchess of Austria, who had been brought up in a Court governed by the strictest etiquette, and he naturally feared that the Empress, unaccustomed to familiarity of any kind, would be furious at this childish and common trick.

After this freak Pauline never reappeared at the Imperial Court.

We find her again at Elba in 1814. Her tender, expansive, and impetuous nature was touched by the misfortunes of her brother. Surely there is nothing strange in that, and it would have been a contrary attitude that should have received blame. She and her mother joined him in Elba at the same time.

We venture to think that Napoleon would never have refused to pay, for a mistress, a

small bill of sixty-two francs thirty centimes (£2 os. 3d.).

And yet that is what he did when General Bertrand, who occupied the post of Grand Marshal of the Palace, presented to him a note which ran thus :

‘I have the honour of submitting to your Majesty the sum expended upon eight window-blinds, placed in the drawing-room of Princess Borghèse. The canvas was provided by the Princess, and the expenses incurred amount to sixty-two francs thirty centimes.’

The Emperor wrote, with his own hand, on the margin :

‘As I did not order this expenditure, which ought not to be charged to my Budget, the Princess will pay it.’²⁵

Again, we find in the accounts left by Monsieur Peyrusse, Treasurer of the Crown in the Island of Elba, a sum of 240 francs (£9 12s.) which, by direction of the Emperor, ‘should be paid by the Princess for the keep of her horses.’²⁶

These economical calculations can hardly be reconciled with the habitual liberality of lovers.

It has even been pronounced curious that Pauline, when the days of darkness came, should

²⁵ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxvii., p. 446, No. 21,670, Porto Ferrajo, January 31, 1815.

²⁶ Peyrusse, ‘Mémorial,’ Appendix, p. 45.

have placed a portion of her large fortune at the disposal of her brother, and that she should have given him her diamonds, as a last resource, on the eve of the disastrous campaign which terminated at Waterloo. If this behaviour of Pauline to Napoleon be considered unusual or injudicious, then it must also be impossible to believe the human soul capable of any spark of nobility. It is not, however, uncommon to find great qualities in women who are coquettes, capricious, and even light in their behaviour, as Princess Borghèse was.

When her brother was in trouble, Pauline, struck by his great misfortunes, showed herself what she really was—a kind and charming creature.

IX.

Caroline Bonaparte and Murat: Advancement of Murat—Marriage with Caroline—The Duchy of Berg—The Kingdom of Naples—Insatiable Ambition of Caroline—The Queen of Naples and General Malet—Governor of Paris—Diplomacy—Removal of Junot—Confidence of the Emperor in his Brother-in-law—Murat quits his Post—Criminal Intrigues at Naples—Forbearance of Napoleon—Signal Treason—Parody of the Island of Elba—Death of Murat.

It is difficult to believe one's eyes when one reads that Murat, King of Naples, husband of Caroline Bonaparte, laden as he was with Imperial favours, was the first to betray the cause of the Emperor. One is inclined to believe one's self even more the victim of an absurd hallucination when one discovers that Caroline, the youngest sister of Napoleon, was, if not the inspirer of, at least the accomplice in this notorious crime, and was perfectly aware of all that was being done.

We are going to show what the Emperor had done to deserve such base ingratitude.

In the first place, we must declare that we have not the smallest desire to deny to Murat his right to admiration for his indomitable and uncontested bravery. He gained nobly his rank and distinctions in the army, and on that score he owes nothing to the Emperor. But he remains his debtor for the royal titles with which he was invested, and which were not obtained by men like Berthier, Ney, Lannes, or Davoût, all of whom were as courageous as he, besides possessing infinitely more solid qualities.

Murat, son of an innkeeper at Bastide, near Cahors,¹ formerly assistant in a draper's shop at Saint Céré,² began his relations with Napoleon by an impudent move. When the latter started, in 1796, for the first campaign in Italy, Murat, provisional Colonel, although in reality only Major in the 21st regiment of Chasseurs, came to the young Commander-in-Chief, and said :

‘General, you have no Colonel aide-de-camp; you must have one, and I propose to follow you in that position.’

Murat's appearance pleased Bonaparte, and he accepted his offer.³ Thanks to his cleverness, Murat obtained definite possession of the rank of Colonel.

¹ Bourrienne, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 289.

² General Marbot, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 48.

³ Marshal Marmont, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 96.

Next year he was a General, and in that capacity took part in the expedition to Egypt.

Scarcely three months after the 18th Brumaire, Murat married Caroline Bonaparte.

‘The marriage,’ says Bourrienne,⁴ ‘was celebrated at the Luxembourg, but with simplicity. The First Consul did not yet consider that his family affairs were affairs of State. He had not, at that time, much money, and could only give his sister thirty thousand francs (£1,200) as a portion. Feeling, however, the necessity of giving her a suitable wedding-present, and not having the means of buying one, he took a diamond necklace belonging to his wife and presented it to the bride.’

No sooner was she married than Caroline, driven by boundless ambition, began to interest herself energetically in the affairs of her husband. She overwhelmed her brother with entreaties, so much so that he said of her :

‘I must always meet Madame Murat in battle array.’⁵

It was also to her, Meneval tells us, that Napoleon one day said :

‘To hear you talk, one would think that I had robbed you of the inheritance of the late King our father.’⁶

⁴ ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 291.

⁵ Roederer, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 515.

⁶ Meneval, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 219.

This resistance, according to Napoleon's habit, was merely made for form's sake; witness the extraordinary and rapid rise of Murat, who was appointed successively Commander-in-Chief, Governor of Paris, Marshal of France, Prince and High Admiral, Grand-Duke of Berg and Cleves, and finally, in 1808, King of Naples.

Having attained these high dignities, the husband and wife both gave way to their special vanities.

'Murat,' says Fouché,⁷ 'had great courage and little wit.'

Very proud of his fine appearance, his chief pride consisted in decking himself out in the most startling costumes.

'Nobody carried farther than he the absurdity of dress and the affectation of pomp.'⁸

This luxurious appearance formed a striking contrast with that of the Emperor, whose costume was proverbial in its simplicity.

The Emperor, with a smile, once told Murat that he was the 'Franconi of the army.'⁹ That this epithet was no exaggeration may be judged from the following portrait, drawn by Baron Fain on a field of battle :

'Murat attracted and kept all eyes fixed upon

⁷ 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 236.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Duchesse d'Abrantès, 'Mémoires,' t. vi., p. 400.

himself by his height, his brilliant costume, and the rich trappings of his horse. His face, his fine blue eyes, his large whiskers, his black hair falling in curls upon the collar of a *kurtka* (a Polish coat), of which the narrow sleeves were opened just below the shoulder, excited attention. The collar of his coat was richly embroidered with gold; it was fastened round his waist by a gold band whence hung a light, straight-bladed sabre, like those of the ancient Romans, without hilt or guard. The Prince generally wore loose yellow trousers, the seams of which were sewn over with gold, and boots of yellow leather or nankeen. The brilliancy of his dress was increased by a large hat, trimmed with white feathers, with a broad border of gold, a large plume composed of four drooping ostrich-feathers, in the midst of which rose a beautiful aigrette of heron's feathers. His saddle and gilded stirrups were of Hungarian shape. The horse was covered with a long, sweeping saddle-cloth of sky-blue richly embroidered with gold; the bridle was magnificent,' etc.¹⁰

In this startling attire, which alone denoted some pluck, Murat charged at the head of his troops. His vanity was not a little flattered when he saw the 'Cossacks stop short to admire his

¹⁰ Baron Fain, 'Manuscrit de 1813,' t. ii., p. 282; Major d'Odeleben, 'Récits d'un Témoin Oculaire,' t. i., p. 201.

embroideries and the beautiful plumes in his Polish cap.¹¹

This theatrical display seems to have been the principal thought of Murat's limited brain. He always insisted that all the accessories of his toilet should be constantly renewed. In whatever part of Europe the Imperial armies might be, thither were sent from Paris large boxes of clothes for Murat. During one of his campaigns, 'in four months,' says Madame d'Abrantès, 'his ostrich plumes alone cost him 27,000 francs (£1,040).'¹²

This little defect, which savours more of carnival-time than of the regulations laid down for officers under arms, serves to prove the tolerance of the Emperor, who could by a word, to the great disappointment of his elegant brother-in-law, have put a stop to this burlesque exhibition.

If in his household Murat seems to have monopolized, for his personal satisfaction, feminine tastes, Caroline, on the other hand, seems to have appropriated the rights which are usually considered the appanage of the strong sex.

'She bore,' said Talleyrand, 'the head of a Cromwell upon the shoulders of a pretty woman.'¹³

The caustic Minister, at the same time, made an

¹¹ Fain, 'Manuscrit,' etc., t. ii., p. 52.

¹² 'Mémoires,' t. vi., p. 400.

¹³ Meneval, 'Mémoires,' t. iii., p. 219.

allusion to the 'great size of her head in proportion to the rest of her body.'¹⁴

Made hungry by the first princely honours that came to her, Caroline, at that time Grand-Duchess of Berg, after telling herself that she might be a Queen as well as anyone else, began to wonder why she should not become an Empress.

The constant absence on the battlefield of the Emperor rendered a sudden vacancy of the throne possible at any moment. Caroline measured her chances, and began to cast about for a means whereby her husband might be declared Emperor in case the opportunity occurred. Caroline, it had been settled by decrees, could not succeed by natural descent, and her imagination, fertile as it was unscrupulous, suggested other ideas to her.

Looking at the probabilities of events, she began to wonder what would happen if Napoleon accidentally died. By a curious coincidence she, in her palace of the Elysée, which she owed to the generosity of her brother, elaborated a plan exactly similar to that imagined by General Malet¹⁵ in his prison. These two combinations could only succeed by leaving out of account the laws of

¹⁴ Duchesse d'Abrantès, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 231.

¹⁵ General Malet was shot in 1812 for reporting the death of Napoleon and attempting to seize the government.—*Translator*.

the Empire, and they differed in this particular, that Malet, in his impatience, believed that the news was true, and acted accordingly, while Caroline waited patiently, at least we will hope so, until the death of her brother should be positively certain.

In order to be prepared for this event, she, in common with the celebrated conspirator, knew that the first step was to gain over the Governor of Paris. To effect this, Malet had nothing but his boldness; Caroline had other weapons, and undertook the easy task of seducing the Governor, at that time General Junot.

She succeeded perfectly in her attempt, not a very difficult one for a young and pretty woman. Junot, who was scarcely thirty-six years of age, was far from suspecting the machinations that underlay the demonstrations of his mistress. Of course she could not straightway propose a compact to the Governor—his devotion to Napoleon was fanatical, and would have upset everything; but she could so arrange that, ‘when the day and hour arrived, Junot could refuse her nothing.’¹⁶

She ended by inspiring the General with a blind passion. Caroline knew that very often the surest method by which a woman may captivate a man consists in abandoning all reserve, and, if

¹⁶ Duchesse d’Abrantès, ‘Mémoires,’ t. vi., p. 405.

necessary, compromising her own reputation. In order to ensnare the General more completely, she did not hesitate to make herself talked about with him.

‘She used to go to the play in the General’s box, driving to the theatre in his carriage. It was not rare to see Junot’s carriage standing at improper hours in the courtyard of the Elysée.’¹⁷

This intimacy, and the plots that served as its mainspring, were not a great secret. Girardin, in his journal,¹⁸ describes how, after a conversation with the Empress, he heard ‘people talking about the intimacy between Caroline and Junot.’ And he adds :

‘Things were so arranged that Murat would have succeeded the Emperor, had the latter been killed.’

Caroline’s calculations were even deeper than that. Knowing how necessary foreign support would be to her when her plan came to the point of execution, she was full of attentions to the diplomatic body. If we are to believe Fouché’s statement, borne out by Mdlle. Avrillon, she did not show herself insensible to the homage of Prince Metternich.¹⁹

¹⁷ Duchesse d’Abrantès, ‘Mémoires,’ t. vii., p. 129.

¹⁸ ‘Journal et Souvenirs,’ t. ii., p. 319.

¹⁹ Mdlle. Avrillon, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 353 ; Fouché, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 181.

On the same subject we find in the memoirs of Madame de Rémusat :

‘Metternich seemed attached to Madame Murat, and preserved for her a feeling which long maintained her husband on the throne of Naples.’²⁰

The Emperor, on his return from the interview at Tilsit, was quickly informed of the little romance that Caroline had spun with Junot, and it will easily be understood that, depending as it did upon his own death, it was hardly likely to be pleasant to him. He scarcely considered the political side of the intrigue, however, nor did he fly into a frenzy of passion, as we are told was his custom. He contented himself with separating the pair.

We have said that Junot knew nothing of the plot, and that he was merely being used as a stepping-stone. He wished to believe himself loved for his own sake, and was not without affection for Caroline. Consequently, his despair was extreme when he was sent for by Napoleon and given orders to start for Lisbon as Ambassador, while at the same time he was to have command of the army of observation in the Gironde.

‘So you banish me! What more could you have done had I committed a crime?’ was his cry

²⁰ ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 48.

when he realized that his new functions were in reality a disgrace.

‘You have committed no crime, but you have committed a mistake. It is necessary that you should leave Paris for a time, in order to put an end to the rumours connecting your name with that of my sister. You shall have unlimited authority at Lisbon. Go, my old friend; the Marshal’s bâton awaits you there. Believe me, your own glory is the real reason why I send you.’²¹

Such were the Emperor’s words as reported by Madame Junot. They do not display excessive severity.

Critics may attempt to insinuate that Caroline’s lover tried to turn to his profit Napoleon’s speech, but the fact will still remain that Junot was sent to Portugal, charged with a mission through which he might acquire glory, and which eventually gained for him the title of Duke d’Abrantès.

Nor was Napoleon less kind to his sister. He wished to appear to know nothing of her little conspiracy.

In the following year Murat was made King of Naples, and thus was realized the dearest

²¹ Duchesse d’Abrantès, ‘Mémoires,’ t. vii., p. 175. It may be added that in the original the Emperor’s speech is in the second person singular, implying great familiarity and affection.
—*Translator.*

wish of Caroline's heart, that of sitting upon a throne.

Her stay at Naples was well calculated to please the new Queen. Her royal husband, almost always with the army, left to her the care of the regency, and she enjoyed every satisfaction dreamed of by her ambition. She held the reins of Government and received incense from courtiers, 'whose muscles are more supple in Italy than anywhere else,' says Mdlle. Avrillon. This humility was in no way displeasing to Queen Caroline, for having on one occasion taken careful notice of the Court of France, during a visit to Paris, she remarked to the Empress, 'One reigns nowhere so well as at Naples.'²²

Napoleon had at last succeeded in restoring tranquillity in one quarter. Caroline, at the head of a kingdom, pleasantly flattered by courtiers with elastic spines; Murat, disguised as a King in a play, riding by the side of Napoleon, who was hidden by his brother-in-law's magnificent plumes; both were in a state of perfect bliss.

Their happiness was such that the very idea of being deprived of it rendered them guilty of the most cynical treachery recorded in history.

In relating here the melancholy episodes in the life of the King of Naples, all synchronous with the decline and fall of the Empire, we shall most

²² Mdlle. Avrillon, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 355.

frequently use the name of Murat, but we wish it to be understood that his wife must be regarded as absolutely associated with him in all his underhand combinations. Indeed, it is more than likely that she instigated them, for she was not a woman to allow her husband to accomplish deeds that she would have disapproved. Be that as it may, we have sought in vain for any protest on her part, any token of affection for Napoleon, who was abandoned, betrayed, and even fought against, by Murat.

In 1812, like shipwrecked sailors on a desert island of ice, dragging themselves through snowdrifts, miserably clad, frozen, starved, exhausted, the French army was making its way back from Moscow, a prey to an indescribable feeling of torpor, from which it was alone aroused by the attacks of the Russians and the hope of some new opportunity of earning distinction. It was there that, paralyzed and worn out by the rigours of an appalling winter, scarcely able to hold their weapons in their aching hands, redoubtable in spite of all, fleeing before the cold, yet always ready, invincible although conquered, prepared to face and rout the enemy, these immortal soldiers called forth the admiration of the whole world by the example they gave of the highest military virtues, heroism in distress, abnegation in suffering.

Having discovered the serious incidents connected with Malet's conspiracy, Napoleon was in haste to return to Paris, partly to consolidate his Government, and partly to organize fresh armies to oppose against the enemies who threatened to invade France.

On December 5, 1812, at Smorghoni, he made over to Murat the command of the glorious remains of the Grand Army, pursued and dogged by the Russians. The Emperor thought he could not do better than turn to his brother-in-law under such painful circumstances.

Shortly after accepting this confidential task, on January 16, 1813, without any apparent motive but his good-will and pleasure, Murat resigned the command, and started for Naples.

In sending an account of Murat's departure, Berthier wrote :

'Sire, a Royal aide-de-camp brought me, at noon, a letter from H.M. the King of Naples, a copy of which is herein enclosed. I begged the King to retain command of the army. He answered me that his decision was irrevocable. I do not permit myself to make any reflections upon his Majesty's conduct.'²³

For a soldier of Murat's value to commit the crime of abandoning his command in presence of the enemy, there must have been some very

²³ Baron Fain, 'Manuscrit de 1813,' t. i., p. 63.

powerful motive. This motive was not to be found in Poland, whence he retreated. It existed at Naples, where the King's presence was urgently demanded, on account of understandings with the enemies of France, to save the throne of Naples amid the ruin of the Empire; this last catastrophe was foreseen from that time forward with a perspicacity that does honour to Neapolitan diplomacy.

The Emperor took none of the rigorous measures that would have been amply justified by this act of insubordination.

On January 23 he wrote to Eugène de Beauharnais, who had succeeded Murat in the command of the Grand Army :

'I consider the conduct of the King of Naples most extraordinary, so much so that I have half a mind to have him arrested for the sake of example. He is a brave man on a field of battle, but wants the power of combination and moral courage.'²⁴

Next day, writing to his sister, the Emperor says :

'The King quitted the army on the 16th. Your husband is a very brave man on a battlefield, but weaker than a woman or a monk when out of sight of the enemy. He has no moral courage.'²⁵

Immediately on his return to Naples, Murat

²⁴ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxiv., p. 410, No. 19,490, Fontainebleau, January 23, 1813.

²⁵ Baron Fain, 'Manuscrit de 1813,' t. i., p. 64; Napoleon to his sister Caroline, January 24, 1813.

found that, under the leaders of his policy, he had no more will of his own than an inanimate marionette that dances across the stage according as its strings are pulled.

It was said at Naples that, at all risks, the support of Austria must be secured. They were thus playing a double game. If Austria continued to support Napoleon, what better supporter could they have with the latter than his own father-in-law? If, as seemed most probable, Austria were to join the coalition against France, Naples would, in that case, be on the strongest side.

‘The first negotiations with the Court of Vienna,’ says Fouché,²⁶ ‘were managed by Count de Mier, Austrian Minister at Naples.’

Fouché was, in all probability, well informed. We read in Talleyrand’s memoirs²⁷ that ‘Monsieur Fouché was carrying on an intrigue with Queen Caroline, Murat’s wife.’

Under the direction of this political sharper, even further precautions were taken. The Emperor of Austria might feel hampered in his movements by family considerations, and might decide to remain neutral. Therefore, without any shame, they tried to approach England, the deadly enemy of Napoleon.

‘Negotiations,’ says Fouché,²⁸ ‘were opened

²⁶ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 169. ²⁷ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 147.

²⁸ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 169.

with Lord Bentinck, Commander of the English forces in Sicily, and Joachim [Murat]; and Lord Bentinck even had an interview on the island of Ponza.'

On the other hand, Caulaincourt says :

'We were quite aware of the intrigues going on between Murat and Lord Bentinck; an interview with that Englishman had taken place on the island of Ponza. On learning this,' continues the Duke of Vicenza, 'the Emperor flew into a violent passion, and said to me : "Murat is either a traitor or a madman. He deserves to be shot, or to be sent to Charenton,"²⁹ there can be no medium."³⁰

We may settle Napoleon's doubt by declaring Murat to have been both a traitor and a madman. He was a traitor because he returned by an abominable and unworthy action the benefits of the Emperor; he was a fool, inasmuch as he would not understand that he was merely a satellite, and did not see that the fall of the Imperial planet must infallibly drag with it all that gravitated in its orbit.

While the Court of Naples was spinning the web of its astute policy, Napoleon gained the victories of Lutzen and Bautzen over the allied forces. The question then arose at Naples,

²⁹ The Bedlam of France.—*Translator.*

³⁰ Duke of Vicenza, 'Souvenirs,' t. i., p. 222.

whether it would not be well to make friends again with the Emperor, upon whom fortune seemed once more to be smiling, as, with some young inexperienced conscripts, without artillery and without cavalry, he had just beaten the formidable armies of the coalition! With a perfect acquaintance with Napoleon's character, with an absolute confidence in his weakness towards his family, Caroline was charged to intercede with her brother for the restoration of Murat. The result was exactly as they had anticipated. Napoleon, who could not bear malice, yielded to the solicitations of his sister, and during the armistice at Dresden Murat retook his place at the head of the French cavalry.

The renewal of hostilities brought about the speedy defeat of the French arms, and the final stroke was given at Leipsic, October 18, 1813. Without the loss of a moment, Murat returned to the allies; and on October 22 or 23, on leaving Napoleon's tent, he went straight from thence to the enemies' outposts. There he had a secret interview with the Austrian General, Count de Mier.

The latter, in the name of the coalesced Powers, guaranteed to the King of Naples his dominions, on the expressed condition of furnishing no troops to France, either in men or in

money, and of abandoning then and there the army and the cause of the Emperor Napoleon.³¹

Strong in this assurance, Murat quitted the Emperor next day at Erfurt, 'on the ground that his presence was indispensable at Naples in order to *defend* his kingdom.'³²

The King of Naples started with protestations of eternal devotion to his brother-in-law on his lips. Napoleon, in ignorance of the treachery of the previous day, 'could not take leave of his old companion-in-arms without embracing him several times over.'³³

This confidence on the part of the Emperor was encouraged by Murat as long as possible. The progress of the Emperor's enlightenment can be traced in the official documents.

On December 3, 1813, he wrote to Eugène :

'The King of Naples sends me word that he will soon be at Bologna with 30,000 men. It is a great comfort to me to have nothing to fear now for Italy. Act with the King as far as possible, and be as pleasant to him as you can, so as to get all you can out of him.'³⁴

Napoleon's security was not to last long.

³¹ Duke of Vicenza, 'Souvenirs,' part ii., t. i., p. 373.

³² *Ibid.*, part i., t. i., p. 277.

³³ Fain, 'Manuscrit de 1813,' t. ii., p. 408.

³⁴ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxvi., p. 485, No. 20,963.

Murat's army was advancing indeed, but with what object? Eugène told the story in a letter to his wife :

‘Times are becoming very anxious, my beloved Augusta, especially on account of these accursed Neapolitans. Was there ever greater treachery, not to declare themselves and to continue to advance behind us!’³⁵

No doubt Murat's wife must bear an enormous share of responsibility for her part in this cowardly treachery. Caroline was more than the accomplice, she was the most active agent, and conducted as a sovereign the negotiations with the enemies of France and of her brother.

‘Monseigneur,’ writes the Duke of Otranto to Prince Eugène, ‘a letter from Prince Metternich has decided the Queen of Naples to enter into the coalition.’³⁶

Convinced at length of the felony of the King of Naples, Napoleon gave vent to this one cry. It is contained in a letter to Fouché, whose real share in this abominable treason he did not know.

‘The conduct of the King of Naples is infamous, and for that of the Queen no word is

³⁵ Marshal Marmont, ‘Mémoires,’ t. xi., p. 452, January 25, 1814.

³⁶ Planat de la Faye, ‘Le Prince Eugène en 1814,’ p. 36, letter dated January 21, 1814.

bad enough. I hope I may live long enough to avenge France and myself for such an outrage and such horrible ingratitude.³⁷

Notwithstanding the contempt with which the Emperor regarded Murat's actions, he tried yet again to bring him back into the path of honour.

'I desire,' he writes to Joseph Bonaparte, 'that you should send one of your people to the King of Naples with all speed, that you should write to him, pointing out very clearly the iniquity of his conduct, and offering to be his intermediary with me. Write also to the Queen, whose ingratitude nothing can justify, and which has revolted even the Allies.'³⁸

Neither the Emperor's humiliation nor his appeals to their gratitude could make the Court of Naples renounce the fratricidal struggle from which they anticipated the preservation of their kingdom.

'The King of Naples has at length taken off his mask ; he attacked us yesterday morning at Reggio with between 18,000 and 20,000 men !'³⁹

Though Napoleon showed mercy to Murat, he received his chastisement from the hands of those

³⁷ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I,' t. xxvii., p. 157, No. 21,239, February 13, 1814.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, t. xxvii., p. 250, No. 21,382, Troyes, February 26, 1814.

³⁹ Marshal Marmont, 'Mémoires,' t. vi., p. 159, letter from Eugène to Princess Augusta, Mantua, March 9, 1814.

to whom he had allied himself for the purpose of betraying his country and his benefactor.

Dethroned by the coalition of May 19, 1815, he was shot at Pizzo in Calabria on October 13 of the same year,⁴⁰ the very day on which, a pigmy parodying the giant of Elba, he attempted to reconquer his throne by disembarking unexpectedly upon the coast of Naples.

After examining, as we have just done, the relations of the Emperor with each member of his family, may we not regret that his reputation as an inflexible despot was so little deserved, that he had not the strength to stifle in himself the feelings which always prompted him to seek the happiness of his relations; and may we not also deplore, if we only consider the interests of France, that he was not the savage and inexorable master depicted by his calumniators?

What other conclusion can we draw from this study, when we see his nearest and dearest working to destroy his prestige in the eyes of Europe, when we see them driven by forgetfulness of the primary duties of gratitude to compromise all the interests committed to them, when, from their childhood upwards, they had never ceased to be the objects of Napoleon's inexhaustible tenderness?

⁴⁰ General Franceschetti, '*Mémoires sur les Événements qui ont précédé la Mort de Joachim I.*'

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BOOK IV.

THE SOCIAL SIDE OF NAPOLEON

I.

Pamphlets of the Restoration—Recent Libels.

THE critics of the Restoration, in their interested or invented writings, have made Napoleon, long a Sovereign by universal suffrage, a spiteful, repulsive being, incapable of assimilation with the rest of his fellow-creatures.

Such exaggerated judgments, formed amidst the turmoil of virulent hatred and greedy ambition, are in most cases rectified sooner or later. Time rolls on, and leaves facts at a distance which enables us to observe them from a more correct point of view, in their true proportions.

This rule of perspective has been nullified, so to speak, with regard to the memory of Napoleon. Successive epochs have produced writers determined to find the Emperor abnormal. These authors, influenced by rancour or prejudice, sometimes by both, have made the same attacks on him. The form changes, but the system is immovable ; the portraits drawn by them are only shadows, the substance is wanting.

A pamphleteer in 1814, in the pay of the English, thus described Napoleon :

‘Never did human being unite in himself so much tyranny, petulance, luxury, filthy debauchery and avarice, as Napoleon Bonaparte. Nature had never before produced such a horrible being.’¹

A renegade, who had been loaded with favours by Napoleon, hesitated not to say, when the time had come to pay his court to Louis XVIII. :

‘This man, who was educated in military cafés, and who preserved their manners and language, can only be the enemy of all that is refined, and of all that contains a shade of that liberty which good society always maintains, and without which no society is possible.’²

The reign of Louis Philippe put an end to the diatribes against Napoleon. As the Emperor’s coffin approached the shores of France, it created so much emotion that even calumny was mute. After this calm, and the silence imposed by the Second Empire, it seemed as if an end had been put to these calumnies ; but even in our own days writers have not blushed to renew their abuse, and have shown themselves in no degree inferior

¹ ‘Secret History of the Cabinet of Napoleon Bonaparte,’ by Lewis Goldsmith, pp. 71-99, London and Paris, 1814.

² Monsieur de Pradt, ‘Histoire de l’Ambassade de Varsovie,’ p. 45, Paris, 1815.

to the writers of the Restoration. Here are the words of an author written in 1872 :³

‘Bonaparte, that Italian conjurer, hesitated at no savage trick, no cruel tragedy, lie, contradiction, or violence. How instructive and how amusing is the high-handed manner in which he treated his subordinates ! He oppressed for the sake of oppressing, and bullied for the mere pleasure of bullying.’

Finally, the same subject has been taken up again by a very eminent philosopher, who has clothed it with all the charms of his style and the power of his language :⁴

‘It was selfishness, not inert, but active and all-invading, proportioned to the activity and extent of his faculties, developed by education and circumstances, exaggerated by success and omnipotence, until it became a monster, until it built up in the midst of human society a colossal *Myself*, which was perpetually spreading out its rapacious and tenacious tentacles in ever-widening circles, annoyed at all resistance, intolerant of all independence.’ He terminates with the natural conclusion, ‘He was essentially unsociable.’

³ Mario Proth, ‘Bonaparte,’ Paris, 1872.

⁴ Henri Taine, ‘Origines de la France Contemporaine,’ ‘Le Régime Moderne,’ t. i., pp. 62, 105. See also Lanfrey’s criticism of Napoleon, published after the fall of the Second Empire.

The basis of the ideas, one sees, is unchanged. All these judgments are identical. Without wishing to draw up a case against anyone, and whilst guarding against turning this work into the brief of a public prosecutor, in order to make the truth manifest we are compelled to combat the last weighty attack which has been made on Napoleon. Our task would be an easy one if it were simply to refute the works written in 1814. Those were only, it may fairly be said, personal appreciations, not comparable in importance to the elaborate studies made by existing authors who have consulted contradictory documents. It is with these last writers, then, that we must do battle; we are armed with the same weapons, and at the distance at which we each of us stand, from events and men, we command the same panorama. In opposition to that which they have seen we place the result of our own observations, with the sole end of establishing the truth, freed from all prejudice, from all animosity, from all concession to political partisanship, and also from all fascination and all hero-worship.

II.

Comparison between Louis XIV. and Napoleon—The Founder
and the Heir—The *Code de la Civilité*.

IN principle, it seems to us equitable to set aside the comparison between Louis XIV. and Napoleon established by Monsieur Taine.

‘Generally, and especially in France,’ he says, ‘the Prince divides his day into two parts, one for business and the other for society. To smile at a repartee, even to make one himself occasionally, to jest or tell a story, such was Louis’s rule in his drawing-room. There was nothing similar in Napoleon.’¹

According to us, no parallel can be established between the two sovereigns. Can we expect the same results from the ceremonious education of one who had been King since he was five years old, and from one who had been educated as a boy on the foundation of one of the Government schools?

‘Louis XIV., who owed his success to the moral forces accumulated by his two predecessors, and

¹ H. Taine, ‘Origines,’ etc., t. i., pp. 89, 90.

to the intelligence that their reparatory reigns had brought to the front, was not long in wasting this precious inheritance.'²

These are the words of Monsieur le Play, one of the profoundest thinkers of our time, and one of the most erudite observers of our history.

Matters were very different when Napoleon came into power. We will take from Monsieur Taine himself the description of France at that period :

'The whole of society was dissolved. Of its disaggregated millions of atoms there remained not one kernel of cohesion or of stable co-ordination. It was impossible for civil France to reconstruct herself—as impossible as it would be to build a Notre Dame or a St. Peter's with the mud and dust of the roads.'³

The two pictures are striking. If we might borrow a comparison from modern things, we would say that Louis XIV. resembles an engineer who gets on to his engine in a railway-station, finds steam up, a good provision of coal and water, the machinery well oiled, and with a skilful stoker ; Napoleon resembles an engineer who has to start again on its journey an engine that has been upset and broken to pieces on an embankment.

(Nothing could be more complete than the

² F. le Play, '*La Réforme Sociale en France*,' t. i., p. 128.

³ H. Taine, '*Origines*,' etc., t. iii., p. 632.

difference between them. Louis XIV. reigned, Napoleon founded.

The Emperor was not like a proprietor who by right of inheritance has had merely to install himself in a comfortably fitted-up dwelling. He was the architect who rebuilds a mansion on a deserted estate. He had to superintend all the workmen, to direct them, to point out to each one his work and how to do it—because they had forgotten the laws of a good organization, they were ignorant of the rules applying to an orderly condition of things. By dawn of day he was first at the works, going from basement to summit of the building, climbing the ladders, striding over the scaffoldings, lashing some, urging on others, setting an example of indomitable energy to all.

For the completion of his work, too, he was constantly obliged to travel great distances, to fight great battles, and even at that distance his was the only motive power of his fellow-workers, scattered as they were throughout Europe, and it will be surely seen that it was exorbitant to ask of Napoleon that he should constantly smile like an indolent sovereign.

But anything extraordinary, improbable, exaggerated, attributed to a monarch, should be regarded with suspicion, and not placed on record without the most searching examination. What a lesson it should be to us to see to-day,

for the first time, reduced to its real proportion, the famous scene of violence that is supposed to have occurred between Napoleon and Lord Whitworth, English Ambassador, before the rupture of the Treaty of Amiens! The following account is taken from a book whose least tendency is to rehabilitate Napoleon :

‘All historians have given of this scene an account which is merely a servile reproduction of that given by Alison in his “History of Europe.” He, as is well known, represents Napoleon as addressing a long and violent tirade to Lord Whitworth ; he even makes a mistake in the date of the interview, and adds : “This violent outburst, accentuated by the gestures that accompanied it, made the English Ambassador fear for a moment that the First Consul was about to strike him.” This story, as it turns out, is absolutely without foundation, as is proved by Lord Whitworth’s own despatch, now published for the first time at full length.’⁴

Thus we have had to wait ninety years for a conscientious historian who would search among the British archives for the authentic document, and who would reduce to its proper proportions a diplomatic incident that previous writers have treated as an unprecedented scandal.

Like all men occupied with business of vast

⁴ Oscar Browning, ‘England and Napoleon in 1803.’

importance, Napoleon had his moments of impatience. It would be ridiculous to deny it; but did his impatience go the length of the habitual brutality attributed to him, of which the kick in the stomach, supposed to have been given to Volney, is quoted as a proof?⁵

Three authors are summoned in support of this story, but we may display some doubt when we show that these three authors in reality constitute but one author. Bodin says that he had the story from Besnard,⁶ and Sainte-Beuve quotes Bodin. Therefore the anecdote of the kick rests entirely upon the authority of the nonagenarian Besnard.

By the side of fragile presumptions and proofs there exists one patent fact, namely, that Volney bore no malice, and that he received other things besides kicks. He retained his seat in the Senate, was soon afterwards pensioned and ennobled, and at the fall of the Empire he was a senator, a count, and a commander of the Legion of Honour.

How are we to believe that Napoleon gave

⁵ 'It was, we are told, about the time of the Concordat. Napoleon said to Volney, the senator, "France wants a religion," to which Volney dryly retorted, "France wants the Bourbons." Thereupon he gave Volney such a kick in the stomach that he fell down unconscious.'—Taine, 'Origines,' etc., t. i., p. 54.

⁶ Besnard, 'Souvenirs d'un Nonagénaire,' t. ii., p. 198. Bodin, 'Recherches sur Angers,' t. ii., p. 410, relates the scene, like all that he tells about Volney, evidently upon the authority of Besnard; Sainte-Beuve, 'Causeries du Lundi,' t. vii., p. 429.

way to such unpardonable violence, when nothing of the kind is charged against him on the occasion when he had to submit to the most startling impertinence from Talleyrand?

In the course of a discussion upon the *Code de la Civilité*, Talleyrand, we are told, said to the Emperor :

‘Good-breeding is your personal enemy. If you could have got rid of it by means of cannon-balls, you would have done so long ago.’⁷

Probably we have not got quite the truth in either story. It is unlikely that anyone would dare to speak to the Emperor in the manner attributed to Talleyrand, and it is equally improbable that Napoleon retorted to Volney’s remark in the manner that has been handed down to us.

⁷ H. Taine, ‘Origines,’ etc., t. i., p. 93.

III.

The Emperor's remembrance of his Early Friends—The long tenure of office of his Ministers—Eagerness of the Old Nobility for positions at Court—Napoleon not Emperor in name only—Attacked even by his Royal Relations.

IN multiplying testimony gathered from the most widely varying sources, and placing in juxtaposition eye-witnesses and official documents, we hope to correct that final judgment which has been thus formulated: 'Napoleon was essentially unsociable.' We assert, on the contrary, that he never set himself in opposition to any of the moral qualities which contribute to render the mutual relations of mankind agreeable.

First let us consider the broad outlines of Napoleon's life.

There is nothing about him which reveals a man desirous of cutting himself loose from the obligations imposed by social laws. It is first of all his family, the constant object of his care, which he is anxious to see happy. When it might have sufficed him to give his relations brilliant positions in their native country, which

they already coveted, his natural affection wished to assemble them all around him. In spite of the small amount of *éclat* which they were capable of imparting to it, he deemed them as worthy as himself of the magnificence of a throne of 'honours,' as Madame Mère said. Here certainly we see one who is a good son, a good brother, a man imbued with all the best family affections, such as are prescribed, if not practised, in modern society.

Let us gather evidence from the painful period of his early struggles. From the doorkeepers at the school at Brienne, employed during the Consulate at Malmaison, to the comrades of his youth—Bourrienne, Junot, Marmont, who in later years became his secretaries or aides-de-camp—however high the Emperor rose, he drew them all up with him.

So benevolent to the obscure and humble, could Napoleon ever, in the course of his relations with those around him, have so transformed his nature as to become absolutely insupportable—a sort of porcupine, always ready to thrust his quills into those who approached him?

Here, again, a general survey of what happened in the reign of Napoleon will directly contradict all of which he has been accused.

Note first that, of all monarchs, he is perhaps the one whose Ministers have remained longest at

their posts. It is not possible to believe that they could each have been specially chosen for possessing an insensible epidermis and a spine of exceptional pliability, because history teaches us that Napoleon's successors found no Frenchmen more worthy than they were to fill the first offices of State.

Later, pass in review the galaxy of men, ennobled for centuries, who begged for the favour of being allowed to live near the Emperor. Thibaudeau has truly said: 'There were not places enough in the Imperial Household for the nobles who intrigued for them.'¹ They were not compelled to return at the bidding of the stranger; they had, at all events, one sacred possession, self-respect, those men who bore the names of Montmorency, Mortemart, Montesquiou d'Aubusson, Talleyrand, Angosse, Radziwil, Kergarion, Turenne, Noailles, Brancas, Chabrillant, Gontaut, Narbonne,² Bouillé, Chevreuse, Mercy-d'Argenteau, Fontanges, Cossé-Brissac, Clermont Tonnerre,³ etc.

What! all these scions of the old nobility, of the proud and ancient French aristocracy,

¹ Thibaudeau, 'Histoire de Napoléon Bonaparte,' t. i., p. 208.

² 'Mémoires de Champollion-Figeac,' p. 360.

³ Thibaudeau, 'Histoire de la France et de Napoléon Bonaparte,' t. v., p. 298.

could they have been so contemptibly lost to themselves as to come cringing before an odious brute for leave to render him the services which formerly they were proud to devote to their historic kings ?

Nor must we lose sight of the fact that all the European monarchs were desirous of entering into personal relations with Napoleon.

The position of the vanquished, we know, necessitates great sacrifices. The interests of his people sometimes compel a king to adopt humiliating measures. But what, for instance, could, in time of peace, five months after Tilsit, have compelled the Emperor of Russia, then at the height of his power, to write :

‘ . . . I charge you to express to the Emperor how sensible I am of all the chivalry he has shown in his dealings with me. I charge you to convey to him all my gratitude, and reiterate that he has no friend or ally more faithful than myself.’⁴

No one has the right to stigmatize as hypocrisy this spontaneous avowal.

Finally, there was in Napoleon’s career one leading fact which alone would suffice to show that he inspired no insurmountable aversion ; this

⁴ Collection Charavay, ‘L’Amateur d’Autographes,’ first year, No. 5, p. 71, letter of the Emperor Alexander, 1st November, 1807.

was his marriage to the Archduchess of Austria. A political alliance, say they. That is equally true on the side of France and of Austria, but it passes the limits of credibility to suppose that a father would be so unnatural as to give his daughter to a man under the ban of civilization, even had that man been a thousand times more powerful than Napoleon. If such had been the conduct of the Emperor of Austria, it would be he who, first of all, would stand convicted of barbarity, for even savages do not fling their children to the wolves.

When, in 1814, the high tide of invective and slander reached the Isle of Elba, Napoleon with his bitter irony—a weapon as formidable in his hands as his sword—defined in a few words the parts played by foreign monarchs and their families. ‘These sovereigns,’ said he, ‘who, after having respectfully sent solemn embassies to me, who, after having united me to a daughter of their race, who, after greeting me as their brother, finish by calling me “the usurper”—spit in their own faces in trying to spit on me. They have debased the majesty of kings, and covered it with mud. Moreover, what is the name of Emperor? Only a word, like any other. If I had no better title than that by which to be handed down to posterity, I should be laughed at. (My institutions, my charities, my victories, these are my true titles

of honour. I care nothing for their sneers of "Corsican," "Little Corporal," "usurper."⁵

It becomes necessary to ask now why these scandalmongers, kings and subjects alike, should have banded themselves together to defame the memory of Napoleon? If it was not the cry of consciences gagged for fifteen years by tyranny and terror, what motive could have impelled men of the highest rank to enter on so dark a course? The answer is easy; respect for human nature compels one to seek for reasons which could palliate such baseness, such tergiversation—the violation of treaties, the rank cowardice, and even cruelty, towards a disarmed enemy.

How can we justify, in the days of exile, the absence of those who had been overwhelmed with almost incredible benefits? How can we excuse the indignities of St. Helena, inflicted by butchers, one of whom was his father-in-law, and the others claimed the honour of subscribing themselves the 'brothers' of their victim?

No elaborate rhetoric is required to explain such proceedings. It is only necessary to recall an everyday proverb, applied by many people as an excuse for injustice—'When you wish to kill a dog, you must first say that he is mad.' (Give a dog a bad name, and hang him.)

⁵ Fleury de Chaboulon, '*Mémoires*,' t. i., p. 98.

IV.

Evidence of Contemporaries: Chateaubriand, Kotzebue, Madame Récamier, etc.—The Legend of the *Little Corporal*.

THE foregoing observations appear so self-evident that they will now enable us to pursue our quest in search of truth.

We must examine the system pursued by Napoleon's adversaries, and meet the rare and insidious documents they have used by numerous and irrefutable materials which were not invented in support of our case.

First of all, we must see what impression Napoleon made upon those who saw him for the first time.

'I was in the gallery,' says Chateaubriand, 'when Napoleon entered. I was agreeably struck by him; I had never seen him before except at a distance. His smile was kindly and delicate; his eyes were admirable, especially from the manner in which they were set under his brow and framed by the eyelashes. There was

no pretence in his look, nothing either theatrical or affected. He approached quite simply, without paying me any compliments. Without useless questions, without preamble, he began to talk at once about Egypt and the Arabs, as if I had belonged to his intimate circle and he was continuing a conversation already begun between us.¹

Although Chateaubriand cannot be suspected of any partiality for Napoleon, we will compare his opinion with that of another stranger under similar circumstances:²

‘I have never seen a portrait of Bonaparte, either in Germany or France, that really resembles him; the greater number, indeed, are not like him at all. The effigy on the five-franc pieces, struck in the year xii., is faithful; each time that I look at one I seem to see Bonaparte himself. His profile is Roman—that is to say, grave, noble, and expressive; when he is silent, he looks cold, and even severe; but as soon as he speaks, a truly gracious smile renders his mouth very pleasant and inspires confidence immediately. He approached me, and talked to me with infinite kindness and ease about the theatres. He prefers tragedies, and pronounced against me, but in an amusing manner, and against dramas,

¹ Chateaubriand, ‘*Mémoires d’Outre-tombe*,’ t. ii., p. 231.

² Kotzebue, ‘*Souvenirs de Paris*,’ t. i., pp. 134, 142.

though, however, with the exception that all kinds are good, except the kind that bores.'

Another stranger, Jean de Muller, says of his first meeting with Napoleon :

'I contradicted him sometimes, and he entered into a discussion with me. I must say with impartiality, and as sincerely as if I stood before God, that the variety of his knowledge, the justice of his mind (without possessing any startling characteristics), the largeness of his views, as well as the manner in which he spoke to me, filled me with admiration and love. That day was one of the most memorable of my life. The Emperor conquered me by his genius and his natural kindness.'³

If we need to have the corroborative testimony of a woman, we will take his declared enemy, Madame Récamier. In her '*Souvenirs*' we are told of the first occasion upon which she came near Napoleon :

'The impression that she experienced on seeing him that day was quite different to the one she had received at the Luxembourg, and she was astonished at finding in him a sweetness of expression very unlike the one he had worn on the previous occasion. The simplicity of his manners,

³ Works of Jean de Muller, t. vii., Tübingen, 1812; Thibaudéau, '*Histoire de la France et de Napoléon Bonaparte*,' t. v., p. 518.

in striking contrast with the theatrical ways of Lucien Bonaparte, struck her forcibly.⁴

‘His look,’ says Stendhal, ‘became excessively gentle when he spoke to a woman, or when anyone related to him a fine trait of one of his soldiers.’⁵

Mollien says that in the first interview he had with Napoleon ‘he was especially surprised at the patience with which his long explanations were listened to by one who had often been represented to him as the least indulgent of men;’ and further on the ex-Minister says :

‘He carried to excess the power of listening patiently. In the private conversations with which he honoured me, I often noticed that same simplicity, that same patience which had charmed me in my first interview, that disposition to hear everything which encourages an inferior to tell everything.’⁶

These descriptions, taken from authors disinclined to flatter, are confirmed by other contemporary writers. Here is the characteristic approval given by the Duke of Vicenza to the facility with which Napoleon allowed himself to be approached :

⁴ ‘Souvenirs et Correspondance de Madame de Récamier,’ t. i., p. 36.

⁵ Stendhal, ‘Vie de Napoléon,’ p. 277.

⁶ Mollien, ‘Mémoires d’un Ministre du Trésor Public,’ t. i., pp. 273, 284, 292.

‘None of the “old moustaches” (the soldiers of the Guard) would have dared to speak to the humblest sub-lieutenant with the freedom that they showed to the redoubted Head of the Army.’⁷

If this allegation be considered exaggerated, it will suffice to read the following anecdote related by Captain Coignet in his ‘Cahiers’:⁸

‘The Emperor was forming a school for swimming. He came into our barrack-yard, and the swimmers were summoned. Seeing me, very small among the others, he said to the Adjutant-Major :

“Bring here that little grenadier who is decorated.”

‘I felt very nervous.

“Can you swim?” he asked.

“No, sire.”

“Why not?”

“I do not fear fire, but I fear water.”

“Oh, you do not fear fire? Well,” said he to Monsieur de Belcourt, “I will let him off swimming.”’

The simplicity of this story bears out what is said by the Duke of Bassano :

‘Many a time have I seen the Emperor at night, going round the camp, stopping here and

⁷ Duke of Vicenza, ‘Souvenirs,’ t. i., p. 244.

⁸ ‘Cahiers du Capitaine Coignet,’ p. 225.

there to talk by the fires, asking what was cooking in the pots, and laughing heartily at the answers he received. He was always amused by the speeches and remarks of the soldiers, and on returning took pleasure in repeating them to us in all their originality.⁹

However this disposition in Napoleon may be denied, it must be accepted as true in presence of the reiterated confirmation of those who were in daily communication with him.

‘I knew him,’ says Marmont, ‘possessed of kindness, and of real kindness, moreover, although that is not the generally received opinion, and capable of true and lasting attachment to those who were worthy of it.’¹⁰

‘Lassalle, Junot and Rapp,’ says Marbot, ‘told the Emperor everything that came into their heads. The two first, who ruined themselves every two years, used to go and tell Napoleon of their difficulties, and he always paid their debts.’¹¹

His heartfelt need of sympathy is explained by his own remark to Girardin :

‘Do you suppose, does anyone suppose, that things always conform to our wishes, and that they so arrange themselves as to give us uninterrupted happiness? If they go badly, and we are

⁹ Duke of Bassano, ‘Souvenirs,’ t. i., p. 184.

¹⁰ Marmont, ‘Mémoires,’ t. viii., p. 384.

¹¹ General Marbot, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., pp. 237, 265.

overwhelmed by their weight, it is then that we feel the want of somebody to whom we can talk unreservedly; it becomes an absolute necessity. But where is one to deposit the secrets of one's heart when one casts one's eyes around without being certain that they will meet those of a friend?'¹²

'What each of us,' says Monsieur de Ségur, the most intimate witness of Napoleon's private life, 'owes to his memory, is to bear testimony to his kindness towards persons in trouble, his sweetness, his economy, his simplicity at home, the constancy of his attachment for those around him.'¹³

'Nobody,' writes General Rapp, 'was more kindly, nobody more constant in his affection, than Napoleon.'¹⁴

'I have several times had reason to consider him a kind-hearted man,' says Roederer.¹⁵

Meneval thus expresses himself in narrating his first interview with him whose secretary he was afterwards to become:

'He spoke to me about my studies with a kindness and simplicity that put me quite at my ease, and showed me how pleasant such a man must be in private life.'¹⁶

¹² Girardin, 'Souvenirs et Journal,' t. ii., p. 106.

¹³ De Ségur, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 240.

¹⁴ General Rapp, 'Mémoires,' p. 12.

¹⁵ 'Mémoires,' t. iii., p. 340.

¹⁶ Meneval, 'Souvenirs,' t. i., p. 74.

Mdlle. Avrillon describes the Emperor to us as 'very friendly with the persons of his Household when he had nothing on his mind, talking to them in a good-natured, almost free-and-easy way, as though he were their equal.'¹⁷

Monsieur de Bausset also, who belonged to the Household in his capacity as Prefect of the Palace, confirms this statement :

'When giving audiences, Napoleon addressed himself to each person in turn, and listened with attentive kindness to all that was said to him.'¹⁸

In case any doubt be thrown upon the evidence of persons attached to his Court, we will bring forward independent evidence, that of an Ambassador notoriously hostile to Napoleon :

'Conversation with him,' says Prince Metternich,¹⁹ 'always had for me a charm difficult to define. He listened to all the remarks and objections addressed to him, without ever quitting the tone or the limits of a business discussion, and I never experienced the slightest difficulty in saying to him what I believed to be the truth, even when it was not calculated to please him.'

And, as though he had undertaken the task of

¹⁷ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 192.

¹⁸ De Bausset, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 2.

¹⁹ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 279.

proving the amiability of the Emperor, Metternich shows him to us putting off his luncheon for two hours in order not to interrupt a conversation,²⁰ or saying plainly to him :

‘Do not let us be either Emperor of the French or Ambassador of Austria ; I shall talk to you as to a man I respect, without compliments.’²¹

And again we see him : ‘Begging his pardon for having kept him waiting ten minutes.’²²

This last trait agrees with one related by a former page of the Imperial Court, Monsieur de Sainte-Croix, who had taken a malicious pleasure in keeping the old Admiral Truguet waiting for two hours and a half without announcing his presence to the Emperor. The latter, happening to meet the Admiral in the anteroom, ‘placed his two hands on the shoulders of the old sailor, and said : “Ah, Truguet, my dear friend, how long have you been waiting ?” ’²³

This frank affability, enemy of all etiquette, has been pointed out by other authors.

After a somewhat excited discussion about music, Arnault became somewhat annoyed. Napoleon went up to him, and said, with a laugh :

²⁰ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 159.

²¹ *Ibid.*, t. i., p. 58.

²² *Ibid.*, t. ii., p. 208.

²³ A story told by Sainte-Croix to an English officer : *Figaro*, November 2, 1889.

‘Well, are you still angry with me? I see I must not attack Méhul in your presence!’²⁴

Miot de Mérito gives us another instance; when he returned to Paris in disgrace, and trembling at the idea of appearing before Napoleon:

‘His first greeting was very kind. He told me in a jesting manner that I had quarrelled with the Ministers, that they did not approve of general administrators who acted for themselves, and thought the first thing I must do was to make my peace with them.’²⁵

Fleury de Chaboulon tells us ‘of that familiar ease which gave so much charm to his conversation.’²⁶

The Duchesse d’Abrantès describes for us the amenity of the Emperor in an episode personal to herself.

She had just returned from Lisbon, where her husband, Junot, was Ambassador. On her entry into the reception-room at the Tuileries, where the Court was assembled, the Emperor could not help smiling at the solemnity with which she, whom he had known as a child, courtesied.

‘Well, Madame Junot,’ he said, ‘one always gains by travelling. What beautiful courtesies

²⁴ Arnault, ‘Souvenirs d’un Sexagénaire,’ t. iv., p. 91.

²⁵ Miot de Mérito, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 40.

²⁶ ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 284.

you make now! Doesn't she, Joséphine?' he added, turning to the Empress. 'Is she not looking well? She is no longer a little girl; she is my Lady the Ambassadress.'²⁷

To finish our picture of the absence of stiffness in the Emperor, we must see him 'coming down from his throne to chat with the members of the Institute.' We quote the very words of an author who has never been accused of flattering the Emperor, La Réveillère-Lépeaux, who thus concludes his sentence :

'It is known that he chatted very freely with the members of this learned body.'²⁸

It has, of course, been stated that Napoleon would never allow one of his words to be discussed. It has been said that 'his first impulse, his instinctive idea, was to fall upon people and seize them by the throat.'²⁹ This is not, however, the impression conveyed to us by Gohier, former President of the Directory, who was imprisoned at the 18th Brumaire, and who therefore might be expected to bear some malice. He says :

'Not only did Bonaparte not mind disagreement with projects submitted for discussion to the Council of State, but he encouraged it. *Intra*

²⁷ Duchesse d'Abrantès, 'Mémoires,' t. vi., p. 231.

²⁸ 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 41.

²⁹ H. Taine, 'Origines,' etc., t. i, p. 55.

parietes, he tolerated everything; no objection could make him angry, and it was the one who had vexed him most whom he generally asked to dinner.³⁰

Those who worked most closely with Napoleon in the affairs of State, notably Roederer and Thibaudeau, corroborate this quality in many places. Meneval, his private secretary, tells us that he willingly endured contradiction, and often yielded to it,³¹ and Caulaincourt adds 'that he bore with great patience contradiction to his favourite plans.'³²

Savary declares that 'the Emperor had so much discernment, such a strong feeling of justice, such an attachment for those in whom he had confidence, that it was not only safe, but even advantageous, to speak openly to him. Though he used occasionally to sulk with some of his friends who told him the truth, he always came back to them with greater esteem and confidence than before.'³³

We could not better complete these general appreciations than by showing Napoleon's attitude when face to face with adversity :

'During the voyage from Fréjus to the Island

³⁰ Gohier, 'Mémoires,' p. 112.

³¹ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 288.

³² Duke of Vicenza, 'Souvenirs,' t. i., p. 158.

³³ Duke of Rovigo, 'Mémoires,' t. iii., p. 456.

of Elba,' says Colonel Sir Neil Campbell, 'Napoleon was full of courtesy and consideration for us all.'³⁴

'On the same voyage,' says Baron Peyrusse, 'I saw the Emperor always in a good temper, and always thoughtful for and polite to everybody.'³⁵

We will take the impressions of Captain Maitland, commanding the English ship the *Bellerophon*, on board of which the man who had been conquered at Waterloo embarked in 1815.

'It may seem strange,' says Maitland, 'that an English officer should be prepossessed in favour of a man who has caused such calamities to his country, but that man had the power of pleasing to such a degree that there are few people who could have sat at table with him every day for nearly a month, as I did, without a feeling of regret that a man endowed with so many attractive qualities should have been reduced to the state in which I saw him.'³⁶

In our inquiry into the social side of Napoleon, we have examined thirty-one of his contemporaries, of whom ten, at least, are his avowed enemies; the answers have been unanimous in their tendency.

³⁴ 'Journal of Sir Neil Campbell,' p. 44.

³⁵ Baron Peyrusse, 'Mémorial,' p. 230.

³⁶ Narrative of Captain Maitland.

Besides this evidence we have even more—the evidence of the illiterate, of those who have not written, of those who have not read, uncultivated minds that take their impressions direct from the manner in which they are treated.

These men, to the number of some hundreds of thousands, lived during twenty years side by side, so to speak, with Napoleon. The thickness of a tent only separated them. They worked, endured unheard-of toils and privations, under the lead of the Chief who took them across Europe. These men are like children ; they hate those against whom they have any complaints to make.

We will see what is the opinion of these men, who represented—the word is not hyperbolic—the entire male population of France. When their bodies, worn out prematurely by fatigue, when their mutilated and shattered limbs might almost have justified imprecations, they created the title of Little Corporal. In the mouth of these brave men, these two words had an importance that we may examine. A corporal is almost a comrade ; his authority is almost fraternal. He never quits his squadron. While he has to care for the needs of his inferiors, he is exempt from none of their dangers ; he is a private soldier endowed with responsibility. Therefore,

in adopting this curious nickname, these humble soldiers affirmed that, in their eyes, their Emperor was to them a comrade invested with command.³⁷

There is the truth, without trappings as without reservation, that rose from every cottage in France!

³⁷ Compare also the graphic picture given in Erckmann-Chatrian's 'Romances,' of the devotion of the soldiery to Napoleon.

V.

Napoleon and his Companions-in-arms — The Prince of Neufchâtel and Madame Visconti—Bachelors—Anxiety about his Commanders—Same Care for his Subalterns and Servants.

THE violence of the attacks that have been made upon Napoleon gives them an appearance of truth ; we must therefore inquire whether it be true, as has been stated, that, ‘with his Generals, Ministers, and heads of departments, he employed the close, incisive style of mere business letters. On each page, under the written words, we can distinguish the man who raves and strikes.’¹

Never were words less correct written. Certainly Napoleon’s marching orders were not written like pastorals, nor with the amplitude of style of Madame de Sévigné ; but if we glance at his correspondence, and listen to some witnesses, we shall be easily convinced that over and over again, even in the heat of battle, he could pass from the dry tone of command to

¹ H. Taine, ‘Origines,’ etc., t. i., pp. 39, 55.

the familiar and friendly language of a man who does not attempt to strain his thoughts. There are so many proofs of this that we may almost ask whether there was one of Napoleon's subordinates who did not receive some proof of his cordiality.

Some instructions to Faypoult, Ambassador to the Republic of Genoa, conclude with these words :

'Your wife is well, and your little niece is as charming as ever. She makes love to my aide-de-camp, and of me she likes nothing but my smart coat.'²

The following letter is to General Kellermann :

'I have received, General, your letter of the 10th Brumaire, and thank you for the kind words it contains. I shall consider as a pleasure any opportunity that I have of serving you. Your son has been ill, but has now recovered. I hope he will continue in my service.'³

During the campaign in Egypt, Major Colbert, who had lost his pistols, received the following note :

'I send you, citizen, a pair of pistols to replace those you have lost. I can give them to

² 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. i., p. 120, No. 113, April 1, 1796.

³ *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 403, No. 2,323, November 5, 1797.

nobody who will make better use of them than you.’⁴

He made a present of a horse to General Menou, with this letter :

‘I have noticed with the greatest pain the dangers you have run. I send you a horse ; it is very difficult to find any tolerable ones. It will give you at least a proof of my friendship, and of my wish to give you a token of my esteem.’⁵

As he did not take Junot with him when he left Egypt, Napoleon, fearing that he might doubt his friendship, wrote as follows :

‘When you receive this letter, I shall be far from Egypt. I regret that I could not bring you away with me ; you were too far from the port of embarkation. I have given orders to Kléber to let you start during the month of October. Wherever we may be, and under whatever circumstances, believe in the continuation of my sincere friendship.’⁶

Side by side with this friendly expansiveness to an old comrade, we find unfailing courtesy allied with the utmost simplicity in his dealings with comparative strangers.

⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. v., p. 509, No. 4,273, July 12, 1799.

⁵ *Ibid.*, t. v., p. 4, No. 3,370, November 14, 1798.

⁶ *Ibid.*, t. v., p. 577, No. 4,379, August 22, 1799.

Here is his letter to Laplace, who presented him with a copy of his 'Mécanique Céleste':

'I have received with gratitude, citizen, the copy of your splendid work that you have sent me. If you have nothing better to do, come and dine with me to-morrow. My respects to Madame Laplace.'⁷

To General Delmas, who had paid him a visit without finding him at home:

'I am sorry, citizen General, that I was not at home when you called. You are one of those whom I like, and whom I have always time to see.'⁸

On another occasion he writes to General Friant:

'I know that since then, and under all circumstances, you have maintained the reputation you have acquired. When you have rested in the bosom of your family as long as you think right, come to Paris, where I shall have the greatest pleasure in seeing you.'⁹

The foregoing extracts all date from the time of the First Consulship, and we may be asked whether, after his accession to the throne, a change did not occur, and whether the same

⁷ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. vi., p. 1, No. 4,384, October 19, 1799.

⁸ *Ibid.*, t. vi., p. 419, No. 5,018, July 24, 1800.

⁹ *Ibid.*, t. vii., p. 340, No. 5,878, November 2, 1801.

cordiality is still distinguishable as in the earlier letters, which might have been written with the object of securing partisans for his ambitious enterprises.

There was no change. His mind was always the same; his sentences were turned with the same kindly courtesy.

To an application from General Gazan, the Emperor replies :

‘Your complaint is well founded. You have done distinguished service. You are made Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour. It was by mistake that your name did not appear in the list issued from Schönbrunn, but I do not regret the omission, as it supplies me with an opportunity of assuring you of the esteem in which I hold you, and of my satisfaction with your conduct at Dürnstein.’¹⁰

When Napoleon gave Marshal Berthier complete sovereignty over the principality of Neuchâtel, the decree was couched in these words :

‘This touching proof of the Emperor’s kindness towards his old companion-in-arms cannot fail to excite pleasure in all good hearts, as it will be a subject of rejoicing to all right-minded persons.’¹¹

¹⁰ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xii., p. 14, No. 9,762, February 5, 1806.

¹¹ *Gazette Nationale*, No. 91, Tuesday, April 1, 1806.

This, it will be said, is merely an official statement, drawn up with respect for tradition. That is true, but we shall see the comrade in the private letter written by the Emperor to his Chief of the Staff on the occasion. Berthier had been living for ten years with Madame Visconti :

‘I send you the *Moniteur*, wherein you will see what I have done for you. I only impose one condition, and that is that you should marry, and on that condition depends my friendship. Your passion has lasted too long ; it has become ridiculous, and I have the right to hope that he whom I have called my companion-in-arms, whom posterity will always place beside me, will not remain any longer a victim to such unparalleled weakness. I desire you, therefore, to marry, otherwise, I will not see you again. You are fifty years old, but you come of a stock that generally lasts eighty years, and the next thirty years are the very ones in which the comforts of marriage will be most necessary to you.’¹²

In order to prove, what will be a surprise to some, that the wishes of the Emperor, even those whose realization he could watch closely, were not regarded by his followers as irrevocable orders, it may not be unnecessary to state here that Berthier, who was very much in love, continued

¹² ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xii., p. 253, No. 10,046, April 1, 1806.

to live with Madame Visconti, and enjoyed his titles during that time, while Napoleon, in spite of his threats, never ceased loading him with favours. Four years passed before he yielded to the wishes of Napoleon, and, after breaking with his mistress, consented to marry the niece of the King of Bavaria.

Napoleon always laughed at the bachelors around him, amongst whom was Cambacérès. In 1802, Thibaudeau tells us, at a meeting of the Council of State, a serious discussion was enlivened by this sally on the part of the First Consul :

‘The question is whether bachelors shall be given this privilege? Who will speak for the bachelors? I call upon you, Cambacérès.’¹³

Another allusion, equally familiar, to Cambacérès, but showing a strong interest in his health, comes from the pen of the Emperor in 1807 :

‘I am sorry to see that your health is not good. I hope, however, it is only one of the attacks to which you are subject. If you would not take so much medicine, you would be better ; but that is a habit among bachelors. Try to keep well ; I wish it on account of the friendship I feel for you.’¹⁴

¹³ Thibaudeau, ‘Mémoires sur le Consulat,’ p. 417.

¹⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xv., p. 34, No. 12,307, April 6, 1807.

This epistolary style is plainly not that of the Sovereign crushing his inferiors beneath his majestic feet. With Napoleon the Emperor gave way to the man, thoughtful, earnest, redoubling his solicitude for those persons whose lives had been endangered by some alarming accident. There are innumerable instances of this characteristic, which does him so much honour. Here are some examples taken from varying epochs in his career.

Here is a letter to Dr. Corvisart :

‘I beg you, my dear Corvisart, to go and see both the judge and citizen Lacépède. The one has been ill for a week, which makes me fear that he has fallen into the hands of a bad doctor ; the wife of the other has long been ill. Give her some good advice to cure her. You may save the life of a good man and one of whom I am very fond.’¹⁵

To Bessières, who is wounded, he writes :

‘I have ordered that the rooms that Junot used to occupy in my house should be prepared for you. If you prefer to go to Gyseh, the house there is at your service. I only wish one thing, and that is that you should make haste and get well.’¹⁶

¹⁵ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. viii., p. 109, No. 6,448, November 24, 1802.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, t. v., p. 135, No. 3,620, November 14, 1798.

He reassures General Pino in the following letter :

‘ I have been very sorry to hear of the misfortune that has happened to you ; do not worry yourself. You have plenty of time in which to get strong again, and remember that, if you are impatient and anxious to walk too soon, you will postpone your recovery by a fortnight. I presume you have called in a good surgeon from Lyons or Geneva.’¹⁷

He sends the same advice to General de Wrède :

‘ I have your letter. I am sorry to hear of your illness. I counted upon you in this campaign because I know your zeal and your talent. You must keep your mind at rest ; it is the only way of curing your body. Do not doubt of the friendly feeling I have for you.’¹⁸

It would be impossible to show more cordiality than he does to Bernadotte :

‘ I have learned with the utmost regret that you have been wounded, and am delighted to know that Madame Bernadotte is with you. I desire your speedy recovery and to see you again at the head of the army, both for the sake of the service and for the particular interest I take in all that

¹⁷ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. ix., p. 171, No. 7,425, December 25, 1803.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, t. xiii., p. 107, No. 11,222, November 9, 1806.

concerns you. Say everything that is kind for me to Madame la Maréchale, please, and scold her a little. She might have written me a line to tell me what is going on in Paris, but I will have it out with her the first time I see her.¹⁹

The following lines were well calculated to restore General Hautpoul to health :

‘Monsieur le Général Hautpoul, I was extremely touched by the letter you wrote me. Your wound is not of a nature to deprive your son of your care. You will live to charge again at the head of your intrepid division. You and your children can always count upon the interest I take in you.’²⁰

When Lannes, on his recovery from illness, wished to re-enter active service, and wrote accordingly to the Emperor, the latter replied :

‘When your health is completely restored, you shall come to me. You cannot doubt the pleasure I shall feel in seeing you, but especially when fighting is going on. But get well before anything. P.S.—Do not doubt my friendship.’²¹

These anxieties on the part of the Emperor were not reserved only for persons of importance about him.

A young page, writing to his mother, relates

¹⁹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xv., p. 322, No. 12,743, June 7, 1807.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, t. xiv., p. 293, No. 11,796, February 9, 1807.

²¹ *Ibid.*, t. xiv., p. 409, No. 11,975, March 8, 1807.

how, while riding at the door of the Emperor's carriage on the return from Erfurt, a heavy storm of rain drenched him to the skin.

'The Emperor got out of his carriage, and, seeing the state I was in, ordered me to stop at the first post-house. I know that the Emperor sent several times to inquire after my health.'²²

On one occasion his valet, Constant, fell from his horse :

'The First Consul immediately stopped his horses, gave the necessary orders to have me raised, and pointed out what should be done for me. I was carried to the barracks at Rueil, and before continuing his journey he insisted upon knowing that I was not in danger. On the day of my return to his service, he came and most kindly asked for news of my health.'

In consideration of this accident Napoleon gave his valet 3,000 francs (£120).²³

Outside his immediate surroundings, here is the case of a simple grenadier, named Coignet, victim of an attempt to poison :

'A report was sent to the First Consul, who gave orders that two doctors should remain with me all night and two nurses during the day. An officer was sent every morning for news of me.'²⁴

²² Marquis de Gabriac, 'Souvenirs de l'Entrevue d'Erfurth, par un Page de Napoléon I.'

²³ Constant, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 64.

²⁴ 'Cahiers du Capitaine Coignet,' p. 152.

VI.

Life and Death of Desaix—Familiarity with Lannes—Death of Lannes—Marshal Bessières—Death of Duroc.

As one collects and quotes these multiplied examples of kindness, one is inclined to ask whether it is not a work of supererogation to accumulate proof upon proof that Napoleon had a human heart, and not the heart of a butcher.

But, in spite of this evidence, piles of pamphlets exist masking the real character of the Emperor.

The more virulent and frequent the attacks, the more complete must be the refutation, in order that an embankment may be built up against calumny which may nevermore be disturbed. Impartial truth, appearing from each page, from each word, from each incident of the history of that period, must raise itself and face defamation, and show the rare qualities of tenderness and charity in the man who was reputed unsociable, and which he had acquired in childhood from poverty, isolation, bitterness, and suffering.

In passing through these diverse stages of his

career, the character of Napoleon was formed in the manner we have already shown.

Shall we venture to say, therefore, in the instances we have already cited, or in those which we shall on some future occasion adduce, that he acted from motives of self-interest in taking care of those who were useful to him, owing to the dearth of men of ability, or that a hankering after popularity compelled him to stoop to flatter some, and to treat others with calculated civility?

It would be an extraordinary assumption which allowed us to reckon to a man's credit only those good actions which were disagreeable to him.

Unless blinded by a desire of vilification, one must accept the principle that man's natural goodness is displayed in its effects upon others, and not seek for motives, whatever they may be, the springs of which are so complex as to defy all analysis. Shall we ask the man who is risking his life for the drowning if he is impelled by mere ambition, or the hurrahs of the crowd assembled on the shore? Shall we ask the benevolent man if he has no other motive than to draw down upon him the blessings of the unfortunate?

Napoleon's sincerity and devotion were both brought into prominence by his conduct towards Desaix.

As soon as Desaix informed Napoleon of his

return from Egypt, he received the following answer :

‘I have this instant received your letter of the 15th Floreal, my dear Desaix. I was anxious at seeing the month pass without having news of you ; I dreaded the worst from Carthaginian good faith. But, however, here you are ; a good piece of news for the whole Republic, but more especially for me, who have vowed to you all the respect due to men of your talent, as well as a friendship that my heart, now very old, and knowing mankind too deeply, feels for nobody. Come, as quickly as you can, to rejoin me wherever I am.’¹

That was not mere polite verbiage ; there can be no doubt as to Napoleon’s real affection for Desaix.

‘Bonaparte,’ says Bourrienne,² ‘entertained for Desaix the highest esteem and the sincerest affection. These feelings never altered. The early death of Desaix alone broke the bond.’

Eye-witnesses have told us what Napoleon’s state of mind was when he heard of the death of Desaix, which occurred at the battle of Marengo, on June 14, 1800, just a month after the affectionate invitation given above.

¹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. vi., p. 273, No. 4,786, May 24, 1800.

² ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 114.

‘Notwithstanding the decisive victory he had just gained,’ says Constant,³ ‘he was very sad, and during the evening made several remarks which showed how deeply he felt the death of Desaix, such as : “France has lost one of her best defenders, and I my best friend.”’

‘Towards ten o’clock in the evening,’ says De Ségur,⁴ ‘the First Consul returned to his headquarters, very gloomy and silent. His secretary asked him if he were not satisfied with his victory. “Yes,” answered Napoleon in a sad voice and with eyes full of tears, “but Desaix ! If only I could have embraced him after the battle, what a glorious day this would have been !”’

Marmont bears witness to the same regrets, and adds that, in memory of his friend, the First Consul, although his staff was complete, attached to his person Rapp and Savary, Desaix’s two aides-de-camp.⁵

Such was the First Consul ; here is the Emperor. His special affection for Marshal Lannes is well known. The intimacy existing between the Sovereign and his old comrade has been proved in a startling manner by Captain Coignet :⁶

³ ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 55. ⁴ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 74.

⁵ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 140.

⁶ ‘Cahiers,’ p. 210. This conversation was carried on, on both sides, in the second person singular.—*Translator.*

'The brave Marshal Lannes,' he tells us, 'came from Warsaw very much displeased with the Poles. In a discussion with the Emperor in presence of his Guard, we distinctly heard these words :

"The blood of one Frenchman is worth more than all Poland."

"If you are not satisfied, go away," replied the Emperor.

"No," answered Lannes ; "you need me."

Only this great warrior dared to *tutoyer* the Emperor.

The latter, taking his hand, said :

'Go to-morrow, with the grenadiers, Oudinot, etc.'

These few lines, from their very brevity, show us whether it was possible to live with the Emperor or not.

However strange this language may seem, it becomes probable when we find Napoleon calling the same Marshal a 'big baby,'⁷ in an official correspondence, because the latter had complained of some reproaches which he thought undeserved.

His friendship for Lannes never failed, and his emotion was great when he witnessed the Marshal's last moments after the battle of Essling. The sufferings of the poor wounded

⁷ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xiii., p. 451, No. 11,136, November 1, 1806.

man lasted for eight days, and it was just at the time when preparations were being made to cross the Danube again.

‘Despite the attention that he gave to the works necessary for these important bridges,’ says General Marbot,⁸ ‘the Emperor, accompanied by Prince Berthier, went daily, morning and evening, to visit Marshal Lannes.’

He died at daybreak on May 30.

‘A few moments after the melancholy event,’ continues the same author, ‘the Emperor arrived to pay his morning visit. I thought it my duty to meet his Majesty and announce to him the sad misfortune, and beg him not to go into the room, infested, as it must be, with unhealthy germs. Napoleon, however, pushing me aside, approached the Marshal’s corpse, which he kissed and bathed with tears, repeating several times :

“What a loss for France and for me !”’

Prince Berthier vainly tried to induce the Emperor to quit the sad spectacle. He resisted him for an hour.

All the memoirs, without exception, confirm the truth of this melancholy scene. No one was in a position to describe it better than General Marbot, as he never left the Marshal from the time he was shot until the end came.

⁸ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., pp. 210, 212.

If Napoleon's very genuine affection for this lieutenant needed further proof, we can give none better than the letter he wrote to the widow the day after his decease :

' My cousin, the Marshal died this morning of wounds received on the field of honour. My grief is as great as yours. I lose the most distinguished General in my armies, my companion-in-arms of sixteen years' standing, my best friend. His family and children will always have special claims upon my protection. It is to assure you of this that I write you this letter, for I know that nothing can alleviate the great grief that you will feel.'⁹

As the complement to this letter, we have these words, written on the same day to the Empress :

' If you can contribute in any way to the consolation of the poor Maréchale, do so.'¹⁰

What comment need be added to these eloquent episodes? To reprint them here is to give the most convincing reply to those who would deny Napoleon all human feeling.

These, it must be remembered, are not rare exceptions, carefully searched for. Every similar

⁹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xix., p. 62, No. 15,282, May 31, 1809.

¹⁰ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I. with Joséphine,' No. clxxi., t. ii., p. 66, May 31, 1809.

event excited in Napoleon the same grief, the same anxiety for those who were in grievous sorrow.

On the death of Admiral Brueys Napoleon could not lavish enough condolence on his widow. He wrote: 'Your husband has been struck down by a cannon-ball on the deck of his ship. He died without pain, and his death was the one which is sweetest to, most coveted by, the brave. I feel keenly for your sorrow. The moment which parts us from the object of our love is appalling. It isolates us on earth, it throws us into convulsions of physical agony. The faculties of the soul are paralyzed; it has no more relations with the universe than are experienced in a nightmare which alters everything. In such a situation one feels that it would be much better to die, if there were no duties which constrained one to live. But when, after that first thought, one's children are clasped in one's arms, tears and tender emotion reanimate the heart, and one lives again for them. Yes, madame, you will live for them, you will cherish their infancy, educate their youth. You will weep with them, and speak to them of their father, of your own regret, of how great is his loss to those who formed and who sustain the Republic. After having reunited yourself to the world by means of filial and maternal love, take some account of friendship, and of the

warm interest which I shall always take in the wife of my friend. Persuade yourself that there are yet men, though the number may be few, worthy to give hope and consolation to the sorrowful because they have themselves endured the soul's anguish.'

As Commander-in-Chief of an army, which he was when he wrote the foregoing letter, Napoleon could only offer platonic consolation. From the day when he became First Consul, his anxiety for those in affliction went much further. He writes to the Minister of the Interior :

'Citizen Ricard, Prefect of the Department of the Indre, who has just died at Grenoble, was a magistrate whom I had particularly remarked. I desire that you should find out for me what means are left to his family, the age of his children, and the kind of education they have received, so that I may put them into a position to follow the footsteps of their father.'¹¹

Here, selected at hazard, are some more letters written under analogous circumstances.

To Lacépède :

'Your loss is terrible ; the idea of your suffering is a sorrow to me. The large number of people who love you share your grief.'¹²

¹¹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. vii., p. 383, No. 5,954, February 14, 1802.

¹² *Ibid.*, t. viii., p. 173, No. 6,538, January 12, 1803.

To Madame Watrin :

‘The Chief Justice, madame, will send you 12,000 francs (£480). The Minister for War has probably sent you a deed promising you a pension of 3,000 francs (£120). These are but slender tokens of the interest I feel in your position, and of the memory that I have of the services rendered by your husband on the field of battle, and I shall seize every opportunity that occurs of being useful to you.’¹³

To Berthier :

‘My cousin, I feel for your grief. The loss of a father is always a sorrow. I know you, and understand what you are feeling. But at eighty-five one must expect the end ; and when one has lived well, one can only hope at that age to leave a pleasant memory. Believe that I share sincerely in your loss.’¹⁴

To Madame Gudin :

‘Madame la Comtesse Gudin, I share your regrets ; the loss is a heavy one for you, and also for me. You and your children will always have a claim upon me. The Minister Secretary of State will send you the deed authorizing you a pension of 12,000 francs (£480), which I have granted to you out of the Treasury, and the

¹³ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. ix., p. 3, No. 7,134, September 26, 1803.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, t. ix., p. 370, No. 7,770, May 23, 1804.

Steward of the Crown-lands will forward to you the decree, whereby I grant a sum of 4,000 francs (£160) to each of your children, with the title of Baron. Educate them in such sentiments as will render them worthy of their father.'¹⁵

The Emperor showed himself quite as much moved at the news of the death of General Walther, who died suddenly, far from the seat of war.

'I share your grief. In your husband I have lost one of my bravest and most esteemed Generals. I have ordered my Grand Marshal to see you, and to arrange with you what is best for your interests and those of your daughters. You and they may always count upon my protection; I will prove it whenever opportunity occurs.'¹⁶

When Junot lost his mother, 'the Emperor, says the Duchesse d'Abrantès,¹⁷ 'wrote him a friendly letter, wherein, it is remarkable, he addresses Junot as 'thou,' and speaks to him as he did when they were at Toulon, or with the Army of Italy.'

The death of Marshal Bessières, carried off by a cannon-ball on the eve of the battle of Lutzen,

¹⁵ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxiv., p. 265, No. 17,274, October 15, 1812.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, t. xxvi., p. 516, No. 21,017, December 17, 1813.

¹⁷ 'Mémoires,' t. vi., p. 393.

inspired the Emperor with profound regret, which he sent to his widow with the warmest assurances :

‘ My cousin, your husband died on the field of honour. Your loss and that of your children is, doubtless, great, but mine is even greater. The Duke of Istria died without suffering. He leaves a spotless reputation, the finest inheritance he could bequeath to his children. They shall also inherit the affection I bore their father. Try to find in these facts some consolation to alleviate your suffering, and never doubt my feelings towards you.’¹⁸

These were not empty words, forgotten when the emotion of the minute had passed away. Seven months later, Napoleon redeemed his promise by relieving the family from the financial embarrassments in which Bessières had left them :

‘ My cousin, I have received the letter you wrote me. Your confidence in me is well founded. I have ordered my Grand Marshal of the Palace to prepare me a report upon your affairs ; I will take all the necessary steps to put an end to your difficulties, and to secure you a proper position. Desire your father, or someone who knows your affairs well (and without the knowledge of the creditors) to see my Grand

¹⁸ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxv., p. 276, No. 19,977, May 6, 1813.

Marshal, and to give him all the information he may require.¹⁹

How deep was Napoleon's grief on the day when, after the skirmish at Reichenbach, before Dresden, Duroc was struck by a cannon-ball!

The Duke of Vicenza has left a touching account of the Emperor's despair on that occasion :

'Just after the news had been brought to him, Berthier came to announce that the Russians had been repulsed, and added :

' "What are your Majesty's orders, sire?"

' "Leave everything till to-morrow," answered the Emperor ; "whither have they carried Duroc? Where is he? How is he, Berthier?"

' "Sire, he is in a house at Makersdorf; Ivan and Larrey are with him. There is no hope."

' "I must see him!" cried the Emperor ; "poor, poor Duroc!"

'During the evening Berthier and I accompanied the Emperor. Duroc, laid on a camp bedstead, was suffering terribly. His face, frightfully shattered, was unrecognizable.

'When we entered, he turned his head towards us, and bent his eye upon the Emperor with the horrible fixity that is only seen in the eyes of the dying. He fainted. The Emperor drew near, took him in his arms. The doctors returned.

¹⁹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxvi., p. 488, No. 20,972, December 5, 1813.

“Is there no hope?” asked the Emperor.

“None,” was their answer.

‘The unfortunate man, on regaining consciousness, looked towards the Emperor, and murmured :

“Some opium, for pity’s sake !”

‘The Emperor approached, took Duroc’s hand, pressed it, and seizing my arm, staggered out of the room.

“It is terrible, terrible !” he said. “My poor dear Duroc ! What a loss !”

‘Scalding tears fell from his eyes and dropped on his clothes. We returned to camp in silence.

‘At five in the morning Ivan came to the Emperor, who understood that all was over.

“He suffers no more !” said the Emperor ; “he is happier than I !”

‘The Emperor purchased some ground at Makersdorf, and gave directions for a monument to Duroc. He himself wrote the following inscription :

“Here, General Duroc, Duke of Friuli, Grand Marshal of the Palace to the Emperor Napoleon, gloriously struck by a cannon-ball, died in the arms of the Emperor, his friend.”

‘This paper he gave to Berthier without a word.’²⁰

²⁰ Duke of Vicenza, ‘Souvenirs,’ t. i., p. 177.

It was by his paternal care for the family that the Emperor honoured Duroc's memory; the following orders were given to Cambacérès:

'You will receive a decree whereby I transmit the duchy of Friuli to the daughter of the Grand Marshal. As the duchy is worth more than 200,000 francs (£8,000) a year, there will remain 100,000 (£4,000) at the disposal of the widow.

'I particularly desire that the interests of the ward may be well looked after and kept independent of the interests of the mother, so that at her majority she may be able to add 100,000 francs to her revenues, which will make her one of the richest heiresses in France. If a guardian or a trustee must be named, I should wish it to be a Councillor of State, such as Count Molé, for example, who, being still young, might assist at his ward's marriage.'²¹

Finally, Duroc's widow received the formal assurance of the Emperor's protection.

'You know,' he wrote to her, 'how grieved I was at the death of the Grand Marshal. His daughter may be assured of my constant protection. I have given her a proof of it in making over to her the duchy of Friuli, and in occupying myself about her interests. You, on your side, may count upon my affection, and upon the desire

²¹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxv., p. 367, No. 20,095, June 7, 1813.

that I have of giving you, under all circumstances, proof of the interest I take in the family of the Grand Marshal.²²

These lines were written during the campaign of 1813, when, having lost his old troops, the Emperor was struggling against the whole of Europe with an army of badly-armed and inexperienced soldiers; when, in short, he felt his throne falling to ruin. But if his expressions in this hour of darkness be compared with those of his earlier letters when the young General was at the beginning of his career and was dreaming of the highest destinies, can it be said that his heart was less tender, his pity less accessible, after ten years of triumph and magnificence, than it was formerly?

Go back even further, and take the letter written by Napoleon, while yet a schoolboy, to his mother after the death of his father:

‘Console yourself, my dear mother. . . . We will redouble our care and our gratitude, happy if we can, by our obedience, make up to you for the loss of a cherished father.’

In the heart of the unhappy child, as in that of the powerful Emperor, the wish to console others held the first place.

²² ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxv., p. 442, No. 20,200, June 30, 1813.

VII.

Napoleon's Letters to his Generals, etc.

THE master, lest he should degrade his inferiors, must beware of becoming a mechanical ruler, a sort of icy-faced automaton, immovable so long as his machinery works properly, but completely upset by the least disturbance.

To spare the dignity of his servants he should appreciate their efforts, apportion blame where it has been deserved, and also award praise to those who merit it.

People have not been wanting to declare that the Emperor, a brutal tyrant in all things, treated his subordinates as a Turk treats a Moor; our modern authors even go the length of saying that he was like a planter with a stick always in hand for his slaves.

To show what a radical error this is, it will suffice to collect here and there some of the congratulations and encouragements that the Emperor daily addressed to some of his functionaries.

By their great number, the documents supporting this assertion, combined with the names of those to whom they were sent, form a sort of *Imperial Almanac*. In reading them we seem to call back all Napoleon's old fellow-workers.

These documents, unquestionable witnesses, prove that the Emperor was not sparing in his praise to those whom he considered worthy of it. No one can doubt this who reads the following letters.

To Bernadotte :

‘ Nobody values more highly than I the purity of your principles, the loyalty of your character, and the military talents you have developed during the time we have served together. You would do me an injustice if you doubted this for an instant. In any case, I shall rely upon your esteem and your friendship.’¹

Also in 1806 :

‘ I have noticed with pleasure the activity and skill you have displayed in this matter, and the distinguished bravery of your troops. I declare to you my satisfaction ; you may count upon my gratitude.’²

To Kléber :

‘ I beg your acceptance, citizen General, of the

¹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. iii., p. 464, No. 2,398, December 18, 1797.

² *Ibid.*, t. xiii., p. 529, No. 11,250, November 13, 1806.

sword that I send you as a mark of esteem and friendship. I impose one condition with it, however, that you should wear it on days when you are really busy.³

Some months later :

‘ . . . If I guided the graver of history, no one would have less reason to complain than you.’⁴

To Gouvion Saint-Cyr :

‘ Receive, in token of my satisfaction, a fine sword that you will wear on days of battle. Make known to the soldiers under your command that I am pleased with them, and that I hope to be still more so. The Minister for War sends you the brevet of First Lieutenant of the Army. Rely upon my friendship and esteem.’⁵

To Moreau :

‘ . . . You have made the arms of France more illustrious by three great victories.’⁶

And in the following year :

‘ I cannot tell you how much interest I take in your brilliant and skilful manœuvres. You have surpassed even yourself in this campaign.’⁷

³ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. iv., p. 105, No. 2,588 May 13, 1798.

⁴ *Ibid.*, t. iv., p. 483, No. 3,271, September 12, 1798.

⁵ *Ibid.*, t. vi., p. 44, No. 4,458, December 26, 1799.

⁶ *Ibid.*, t. vi., p. 282, No. 4,797, May 14, 1800.

⁷ *Ibid.*, t. vi., p. 561, No. 5,271, January 9, 1801.

To Masséna :

‘I could not give you a greater proof of my confidence than by conferring upon you the command of the principal army of the Republic, the one that requires a combination of military talent, policy, and strict honesty.’⁸

To Suchet :

‘I have seen with pleasure the various advantages that you have gained, and I see from your letter that you are covetous of glory ; it is the way to do great things.’⁹

And eleven years later Marshal Berthier is ordered to write a special letter to Suchet, in order to testify the satisfaction of the Emperor with his good generalship during the campaign just concluded.¹⁰

To Brune :

‘. . . You have restored their ancient glory to our plains on the Adige.’¹¹

To Jourdan :

‘Acquaint him,’ wrote the Emperor to the Minister of the Interior, ‘with the satisfaction his administration gives me, the desire I feel to place him near me, and the intention I have formed of

⁸ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. vi., p. 390, No. 4,950, June 25, 1800.

⁹ *Ibid.*, t. vi., p. 419, No. 5,016, July 24, 1800.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, t. ix., p. 458, No. 17,444, March 9, 1811.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, t. vi., p. 61, No. 5,270, January 9, 1800.

putting him up for the Senate if he wishes me to do so.^{'12}

Four years later Jourdan received the following lines :

'Do not doubt that, under all circumstances, I will do everything that you desire ; that, in the plans with which I am incessantly occupied, you are included ; and that you may feel sure of a fortune proportionate to your rank and to your services.'¹³

To Ney :

'I understand your regret at not having been present at the battle. I felt it too, remembering as I did your splendid conduct at Elchingen. You cannot be everywhere. You have done very well in the Tyrol.'¹⁴

To Davoût :

'I congratulate you with all my heart on your splendid conduct. Express my satisfaction to all your *corps d'armée* and to your generals. They have earned a right to my esteem and gratitude for ever. Let me hear from you. . . .'¹⁵

To Lannes :

'I have learnt with pleasure from your narrative the brilliant conduct of your *corps d'armée*.

¹² 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. viii., p. 114, No. 6,459, November 30, 1802.

¹³ *Ibid.*, t. xii., p. 47, No. 9,815, February 14, 1806.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, t. xi., p. 483, No. 9,580, December 15, 1805.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, t. xiii., p. 361, No. 11,014, October 16, 1806.

But I learnt with pain that your health is always weak. You know I appreciate all the courage you have shown, and attribute it to your zeal for my service and your friendship for myself.’¹⁶

Gaudin, the Minister of Finance, finding himself in an awkward position, had recourse to the Emperor :

‘I quite approve of all you have done with regard to your affairs. I owe much to your good administration, and it is only natural that I should come to your assistance under such circumstances. I have, therefore, in the letter enclosed, ordered M. Béranger to send you 300,000 francs from the funds belonging to the Grand Army. I will put that right on the Civil List. Take this as a proof of my satisfaction with your services.’¹⁷

To La Bouillerie :

‘I have appointed you Paymaster-General of the Marines. I am very glad to have found this opportunity of showing you my satisfaction. You will have the Legion of Honour. It is a pleasure to me to announce it to you myself.’¹⁸

To Lacuée, at the War Office :

‘I have read your letter with pain. How

¹⁶ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xiv., p. 119, No. 11,516, December 29, 1806.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, t. xiv., p. 255, No. 11,724, January 29, 1807.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, t. xiv., p. 505, No. 12,132, March 23, 1807.

could you have supposed that I could ever have the smallest doubt of your zeal and your attachment to me? I have good grounds for complaining of so unjust a sentiment on your part. No one could be better satisfied than I am with all that you have done. . . .'¹⁹

'I had yesterday an interview with the Emperor of Russia. I had one to-day with the King of Prussia. You are entitled to hear this news, which will give you more pleasure than anyone, because these are victories obtained by the good organization of the army, and you have long toiled and kept watch for that important object. I wish you to see in these expressions fresh proofs of my approbation.'²⁰

The Emperor's kindness to this faithful servant is unceasing :

'I have received your letter. A man who works so hard as you requires a home. I shall see with pleasure your marriage to Mademoiselle Bianco de Brantés, and I hope you will have children worthy of you.'²¹

And in 1811 we also find the following words :

'Your services are not only necessary to me, they are very agreeable. The complaints which

¹⁹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xv., p. 195, No. 12,539, May 6, 1807.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 374, No. 12,831, June 26, 1807.

²¹ *Ibid.*, t. viii., p. 24, No. 14,418, October 27, 1808.

have been made against the contractors are details of administration, and no one can do more justice to all your good qualities.'²²

The humblest of his servants profited by Napoleon's constant desire to give proof of his satisfaction. We have here a letter from him to Clarke, Minister for War :

'I have read with interest the two large reports you have sent me. I wish you to let me know what token of approval I can send to the clerk who drew them up. They are most carefully done. I have only had time to read them once, but I can find no fault in them.'²³

His letters reached even the lowest ranks of the army ; he wrote as follows to Léon Aune, Sergeant in the Grenadiers :

'I have received your letter, my brave comrade ; you had no need to speak to me of your actions. You are the bravest grenadier in the army since the death of poor Benezette. You shall have one of the hundred swords that I distribute to the army. All your comrades are of opinion that you are the pattern of the regiment. I much wish to see you ; the Minister for War will send you the order. I love you like my own son.'

As a postscript we read :

²² 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxii., p. 347, No. 17,949, July 26, 1811.

²³ *Ibid.*, t. xviii., p. 244, No. 14,744, January 27, 1809.

‘General Murat is to give him his commission as Sub-lieutenant in the Consular Guard.’²⁴

So constant is Napoleon’s sense of justice and gratitude for services rendered, that even after their death he is anxious about what has been done to honour the memory of those who were devoted to him :

‘I am surprised that nothing has yet been done to honour the memory of General Régnier, whose career was so distinguished. Have the funeral oration pronounced by Pastor Marron published in the *Moniteur*. Send also a notice to the Minister for War, that he should have a few flowers thrown on the tomb of a man who served well, who was an upright man, and whose death is a loss to France and to me.’²⁵

These preoccupations are dated Soissons, 1814; that is to say, the most anxious moment in the crisis that ended in the abdication, which was signed a month later. To think of others at such a moment is more than solicitude, it is self-abnegation.

²⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. vi., p. 91, No. 4,529, January 15, 1800.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, t. xvii., p. 306, No. 21,469, March 12, 1814.

VIII.

Marmont created Marshal—The Duke of Belluno—Recollections of Italy, Russia, etc.

ONE of the dangers in a widely-extended command is the chance of wounding susceptibilities. Inferiors are generally inclined to see in any remonstrance addressed to them for the good of the public service an attempt upon their merits or their privileges.

Napoleon, whose vigilance had to cover such an immense space, could not escape the inevitable condition of displeasing some of those around him.

When his omnipotence enabled him to free himself from all scruples, he always tried to dispel by some favour or token of sympathy the discontent he had involuntarily caused. Roederer said of him, not without truth : ‘ He was always sorry to vex those who were attached to him.’¹

Marmont relates an anecdote personal to himself.

¹ ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 340.

It was a few days after the battle of Wagram. The Emperor was discussing with Marmont some of the latter's manœuvres, and criticised some of them severely.

'My conversation with him,' says Marmont, 'lasted over two hours and a half. I was overwhelmed with fatigue and disappointment. On my return to the miserable hut I had selected for my shelter, I stretched myself upon the straw, and began relating to my chief of the staff, General Delort, the strange and wearisome conversation I had had with the Emperor, when Alexandre de Girardin, aide-de-camp to the Prince of Neufchâtel, entered, and said to me :

"General, will you permit me to embrace you?"

"As much as you please, my dear Girardin," I answered; "but you will be courageous if you embrace so dirty a man with so long a beard."

'He continued immediately :

"There is your nomination as Marshal."

'Such an idea had never crossed my brain, so painful had been the impression left upon me by my conversation with the Emperor.'²

Here is another, and a no less significant, incident concerning the same Marshal, and related by Baron Fain :³

² Marmont, '*Mémoires*,' t. iii., p. 255.

³ '*Manuscrit de 1814*,' p. 176.

‘In 1814, after the loss of Rheims, Marmont was summoned to headquarters to give an account of his disaster. On seeing him, Napoleon broke into reproaches, which entered deeply into Marmont’s heart. However, the complaints were followed by explanations, and soon the feelings that Napoleon always entertained for his aide-de-camp gained the upper hand, and he assumed the position only of a master in the art of war correcting the faults of a favourite pupil. Napoleon ended by keeping him to dinner.’

In the ‘Manuscrit de 1814’⁴ Baron Fain relates another trait analogous to the last one.

After the battle of Montereau, the Emperor thought that Marshal Victor, Duke of Belluno, by coming up late, had allowed the enemy to occupy the town; and the Marshal, who had excused himself several times on the plea of fatigue, received permission to leave the army. This permission was only a euphemism for disgrace.

The Duke of Belluno received it with the utmost grief. He went to Surville, and, with tears in his eyes, protested against the decision.

On seeing him, Napoleon gave free vent to his displeasure, and overwhelmed the unfortunate Marshal with reproaches. Vainly did the Duke try to explain; Napoleon’s anger would give him no opportunity.

⁴ P. 117.

At length, however, he succeeded, by raising his voice, in protesting his fidelity. He reminded Napoleon that he was one of his oldest companions-in-arms, and that he could not quit the army without disgrace.

He did not invoke the recollections of Italy in vain ; the conversation took a more gentle turn. Napoleon spoke only of the need the Duke must feel for a little rest. His numerous wounds, his suffering, perhaps, rendered him incapable of bearing the fatigues of the advanced guard.

Vainly, however, did the Emperor try to induce Victor to retire. The latter insisted upon remaining, and ended by declaring that he would not quit the army.

‘I will take a musket,’ he said. ‘Victor will place himself in the ranks of the Guard.’

These last words conquered Napoleon.

‘Well, Victor,’ he said, giving him his hand, ‘stay. I cannot restore to you your army corps, because I have already given it to Gérard ; but I give you two divisions of the Guard ; go and take command, and let us say no more about it.’

‘The reader,’ adds Baron Fain, ‘has assisted at one of the scenes described in libels as so terrible. It was thus that Napoleon was angry, and thus that he was wont to be appeased.’

These anecdotes are not purposely selected. Marmont’s memoirs, hostile to Napoleon, the

authority of Baron Fain, recognized by all historians, would by themselves be sufficient guarantees even if they were unsupported by the facts themselves—that is to say, by the nomination of Marmont to the marshalate immediately after severe criticisms, the violent reproaches for his check at Rheims, followed by an invitation to dinner, the replacement by Gérard of Marshal Victor, and the immediate reinstatement of the latter in the army.

Another Marshal, Lefebvre, thought that he had lost ground in the opinion of the Emperor ; here is the answer he received :

‘ Although I was annoyed at the fact that the Prussian garrison had gone away on horseback and with their guns, I am none the less satisfied with your services, and have already given you proof of this, which you will learn with the first news from Paris, and which will leave no doubt in your mind as to the esteem in which I hold you.’⁵

The proofs were considerable. They included the elevation of Lefebvre to the Dukedom of Dantzic, and his appointment as Senator.

On the other hand, see how Napoleon hastens to quiet the uneasiness of those who fancy that

⁵ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xv., p. 282, No. 12,683, May 29, 1807.

they have lost his good opinion. To General Moncey he writes :

‘You know how I value your integrity and your talents. The little alterations which have sprung up in the Cisalpine Republic have occasioned no change in my regard for you, and I shall avail myself of the first opportunity of giving you a public proof of this.’⁶

To the complaints of General Julien, Napoleon answered :

‘I have received your letter of February 25. I am sorry to see that you are vexed. I have before now given you proof of the satisfaction your services have given me. Do not doubt that, when opportunity arises, I will give you special proofs of my regard.’⁷

When confronting Mollien, Minister of Finance, who had taken to himself certain vague expressions, Napoleon did not scruple to enter into explanations which had little pride or severity about them.

‘Monsieur Mollien,’ he wrote, ‘I cannot understand your letter. I am sorry that you should have thought what I said to the Council of State concerned you in the least. I should have a right to complain of this injustice on your part ; I will

⁶ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. vii., p. 224, No. 5,689, March 14, 1801.

⁷ *Ibid.*, t. xvi., p. 387, No. 13,618, March 3, 1808.

not do so, however, because it furnishes me with another opportunity for assuring you of my satisfaction with your services, and my intention of shortly giving you a proof of my regard.⁸

M. de Lacépède taking offence in consequence of objections made to the management of the House at Écouen,⁹ the Emperor in some sort made excuses to him, writing :

‘I have received your letter. I am sorry that the one I wrote to you should have distressed you. It was certainly not my intention. . . . Above all, believe that no one can wish more than I do to give you proofs of my satisfaction and esteem.’¹⁰

Le Brun, who was sent on a mission to Genoa, had caused the Emperor great irritation by his administrative carelessness. The Emperor’s displeasure is strongly expressed in his letters to Fouché and Cambacérès. To the former he writes :

‘Prevent the insertion in the Paris newspapers of what Monsieur Le Brun has written at Genoa, particularly the letters that are supposed to have come from me, in which I am made to talk like a cobbler.’¹¹

⁸ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xvi., p. 15, No. 13, 123, September 7, 1807.

⁹ Madame Campan’s school for girls.

¹⁰ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ xvii., p. 418, No. 14, 231, July 26, 1808.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, t. xvi., p. 358, No. 9, 429, October 26, 1805.

To Cambacérès :

‘I send you one of Le Brun’s bulletins. Tell me in confidence whether he has lost his head. I begin to think he has. Good heavens! what fools literary men are! A man who can translate a poem cannot manage fifteen men. I have never been so surprised at anything in my life as I have been at Le Brun’s conduct since he went to Genoa!’¹²

The Emperor’s indignation was at white heat. The same day he addressed a reprimand to Le Brun, in which we find these words :

‘I have just read a note, signed by you, entitled “Insurrection at Piacenza.” I can only express to you my extreme displeasure at the want of judgment displayed in the article, which is as ridiculous as it is out of place. You are not called upon to give an account to the public, but to me alone. Permit me to tell you plainly that I do not recognize you as you are now. You are not at Genoa to write, but to govern. You have the knack of making out of a trifle a matter of importance, which will greatly delight my enemies in France.’¹³

We may consider the terms of this letter too severe, but we must not forget that during

¹² ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xi, p. 554, No. 9,699, January 24, 1806.

¹³ *Ibid.*, t. xi, p. 555, No. 9,700, January 24, 1806.

four months the Sovereign had contained himself, although he had constantly had to complain of Le Brun, who had received several warnings.

But be that as it may, the letter, we admit, was too severe. No sooner, however, was it gone, than Napoleon, seized with remorse, recognizing that he had been too sharp, fearing to hurt an old servant and a former colleague in the Consulate, took his pen, and of his own accord thus diminished the effect of his reproaches :

‘In my former letter I expressed to you my displeasure at the article you had printed upon the insurrection at Piacenza. I should be sorry if you interpreted it otherwise. I wish by this one to express to you my satisfaction at the measures you have taken to put down the rising. (I blamed your words, but I praise your zeal.’¹⁴)

In Napoleon’s intercourse with the men of the Empire, what trace do we find of the inexorable despot, a sort of atrabilious tyrant, portrayed by some of his calumniators ?

Is he not the man of all others who can understand the weight of hard words, because he has himself felt their bitter impression ? When the recollection of his own early struggles was con-

¹⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xi., p. 559, No. 9,709, January 27, 1806.

stantly brought back to him in this way, his scrupulousness amounted to humility.

The foregoing anecdotes, taken from authentic sources, from documents still existing, indeed, in the National Archives, enable us to give credence to another incident of the same kind.

'During the campaign of Moscow,' says the Duke of Vicenza,¹⁵ 'after a very heated discussion, I withdrew from headquarters and retired into a sort of garret. Berthier came to me from the Emperor, who had sent for me. I refused, as I was determined to resign the post I held near him. I even wrote to him asking for a command in Spain. He sent me back my letter, at the end of which he had written :

"I do not want to send you to be killed in Spain. Come and see me ; I am waiting for you."

'As soon as he saw me, the Emperor laughed, and, stretching out his hand, said :

"You know that we are like two lovers who cannot get on without each other."'

If one reads this event of 1812 by the light of Mollien's criticism of him in 1801 : 'His outbursts are not rare, but they leave no trace. The First Consul is the first to acknowledge them, and often begs that others will forget them as he does

¹⁵ 'Souvenirs,' t. i., p. 319.

himself'¹⁶—we must admit that the character of the Emperor was well known to his contemporaries, that that character never varied, and that we can follow it in a straight, clear, and continuous line throughout all the different stages of his career.

¹⁶ Mollien, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 285.

IX.

Precautions of Napoleon—Marmont, Fouché, Le Brun, Junot,
Madame Marescot.

THE manifestations of temper with which Napoleon is often reproached may surely be forgiven to a man with all the overwhelming pre-occupations that were crowded into his brain. (At home he had to establish social order upon the ruins of an administration ten centuries old;) abroad, to crush coalitions which were incessantly reforming, compelled, to effect this, to upset kingdoms, displace nations, and to ensure and organize the preponderance of his Empire over the whole of Europe. Such were the plans that he had conceived, and that he tried to carry out in the face of resistance and difficulties that would have justified a permanent condition of distrust and irritation.

Finally, if we consider that he did not content himself, in his projects, with the part of designer, but that he was an active worker in carrying them

out, we shall find plenty of reasons for his not always having a mind at leisure to smooth away the effects of a moment of impatience, nor to maintain the exquisite courtesy of unruffled composure.

Nevertheless, how many of those who complained most loudly of not having found the Emperor sufficiently gracious at certain times would, in his place, condemned to the same brain pressure, have shown as much tranquillity, as much self-restraint?

How many people, placed in a position to believe that everything is permitted to them, would have weighed the consequences of their words to the point of scarcely daring to utter a well-deserved reproach?

We shall see that Napoleon experienced some embarrassment when he had delicate hints to convey, and that he even sometimes employed a third person to transmit disagreeable warnings.

Thus he writes to Prince Eugène :¹

‘ Tell Marmont, in confidence, that questions of accounts are gone into here with the utmost severity ; that any irregularity might ruin him and his friends ; that he has a reputation for integrity to preserve ; that he must be the same man as him I knew at the sacking of Pavia in the year v.,

¹ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xiii., p. 60, No. 10,629, August 9, 1806.

and that he must suppress the abuses to which soldiers were prone in the year xiv.'

When Fouché, in 1807, wishing to hurry on the Imperial divorce, adopted methods displeasing to the Emperor, the latter wrote to Maret and said :

'I see with sorrow, from your bulletin, that things are being discussed which must be displeasing to the Empress from every point of view. I have written strongly to the Minister of Police upon the subject. It might not be amiss if you would mention it to him, without appearing to have any directions from me. I told him what I thought at Fontainebleau, and have written to him since. It seems to me that such things ought not to need being said twice over.'²

Before writing to Le Brun the letters we have read, he had already written the following to Cambacérès :

'Monsieur Le Brun is publishing in the newspapers at Genoa some letters which are very foolish. It is not fitting. Make him understand that, either by writing yourself or through Monsieur de Marbois, and as if you had learned it accidentally from others. I wish that he should have no idea that it comes from me, as that would cause him too much pain.'³

² 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xvi., p. 184, No. 13,379, December 6, 1807.

³ *Ibid.*, t. xi., p. 124, No. 9,123, August 24, 1805.

The deplorable capitulation of Baylen was signed, with General Dupont, by General Marescot, whose wife was attached to the person of the Empress. This unfortunate reverse, inflicted in open country upon 20,000 Frenchmen by some Spanish bands, was a severe blow to the Emperor.

He was exasperated and humiliated at feeling that a blow had been struck at his reputation as an invincible chief. In order to give clear proof of the disfavour with which he regarded the signatories of the treaty, he deprived Marescot of his functions (till the court-martial pronounced sentence), and then decided to remove Madame Marescot from her post at Court, as much to emphasize his reprobation of the General's action as to avoid perpetuating the recollection of it under his eyes.

An official order, a mere signature, would have sufficed for that purpose, and if ever haste, or even violence, could have been excused, it would have been in such a moment of irritation. See how carefully, however, the Emperor avoids adding to the disgrace :

‘General Marescot,’ he writes to the principal lady-in-waiting, ‘having dishonoured himself by placing his name to an infamous capitulation, which has obliged me to take from him all his posts and employments, it is impossible under

these circumstances that Madame Marescot should continue to act as lady-in-waiting, however innocent she may be and however great may be her merits. I desire, therefore, that you should ask her to resign, but do it with all the kindness and gentleness possible.⁴

Even for the most trifling observation which, if taken in bad part, might wound the susceptibilities of a friend, Napoleon requires an intermediary; for example, when he instructs Cambacérès :

‘Junot,’ he writes to Cambacérès, ‘always writes to me on paper with so deep a black border that it frightens me to receive his letters. Give him to understand that it is contrary to custom and respect, and that one should never write to a superior upon paper bearing the marks of personal mourning.’⁵

In the same class of subjects we have already seen Napoleon asking M. de Metternich to call the attention of Maria-Louisa to some slight inadvertences in her conduct. In former chapters of this work we have seen him incapable of the severity exacted by his interests and the circumstances; we have observed how he temporized, chiefly with respect to his brothers. We shall soon see his forbearance towards Bourrienne, Fouché, Talleyrand, etc.

⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xvii., p. 490, No. 14,296, January 6, 1808.

⁵ *Ibid.*, t. xiv., p. 580, No. 12,236, March 31, 1807.

What a contrast between this Napoleon subject to shyness, which we all of us have some difficulty in conquering, and the foaming tiger, always ready to spring with teeth and claws upon all who cross his path !

Although we desire to prove that the Emperor was endowed with at least as much humanity as his detractors, we should have missed our intention if we allowed him to pass for a soft, undecided man, flattering everybody because he had need of everybody. That would be a remarkable distortion of the truth, for the salient feature in his character (was that he feared nobody and cared very little for what anybody thought of his proceedings.)

When a higher interest is at stake, unless his affection or his gratitude get the upper hand, he is utterly regardless of the consequences of his outspokenness ; what he has to say he says clearly and distinctly, without periphrasis, and giving warning that 'henceforward he will not complain, but will punish.'⁶

They who receive his punishments or his reproaches can, if they choose, resign their posts, quit the Court and France also ; the Emperor is indifferent.

To the greater honour of Napoleon, we shall be able to prove that, as General in Italy and Egypt,

⁶ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. x., p. 299, No. 8,551, April 8, 1805.

when he ought, to serve his ambition, to have rallied round him help of every sort, he was more severe, more harsh towards both Generals and privates, than after he became absolute Emperor, independent of everyone, having all to give and nothing to ask. Our contradictors are the first to say that in 1796 'that little beast of a General frightened men like Augereau, Masséna, and Decrès.'⁷

This is how Napoleon could speak to his Generals and officials, when he thought necessary, to teach them how to regard their duties.

In 1797 he said to General Despinos, who came to pay his respects :

'General, your command in Lombardy had made me realize your want of uprightness and your love of money, but I did not know you were a coward. Quit the army, and never let me see you again.'⁸

'Write to General Gardanne,' are Napoleon's orders to Berthier, 'and tell him that I have heard many complaints of his tyranny towards the inhabitants of the country ; tell him that he is to behave in a manner worthy of the army, so that no further complaints may reach me.'⁹

⁷ H. Taine, 'Origines,' etc. ; 'Le Régime Moderne,' t. i., pp. 20, 21.

⁸ Marmont, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 188.

⁹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. ix., p. 331, No. 7,695, April 18, 1804.

To Admiral Truguet :

‘I cannot help being displeased with the squadron under your orders. I have a right to expect deeds from you, and not merely words and promises.’¹⁰

Junot, the friend of his youth, does not escape reprimands for his faults :

‘I have observed your conduct with the greatest pain. How could you so far forget the immense superiority that my confidence in you gives you, as to arrest an official, a Prefect who also possesses my confidence? You have treated a Prefect as you would one of your corporals. You have displayed a want of tact and a forgetfulness that appear to me incomprehensible. What you have done is unexampled. I have but one word to say : If the matter can be arranged so that the Prefect should forget it, I will forget it too ; if not, I will never again employ you in any civil business.’¹¹

To the same General :

‘I can only be annoyed with you for not obeying my orders. I flatter myself that, henceforward, you will carry out my intentions more exactly, and will not regard what I say as jests. You have a strange idea of your duties

¹⁰ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. ix., p. 376, No. 7,780, May 25, 1804.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, t. xii., p. 362, No. 10,214, May 8, 1806.

and of military service. I do not recognize you.¹²

To Admiral Decrès :

‘I will give you a month in which to answer my letter, but during that time collect materials for an answer without any *buts* or *ifs* or *fors*.’¹³

This Admiral, no doubt habitually prolix, drew on himself seven years later an equally sharp rebuke :

‘He is not required to write to me, he is required to start. Hurry him on as much as you possibly can.’¹⁴

As a rule, when people are in trouble, they become less bold, they are attentive to others, they seek for support, they avoid anything that could remove from them their last faithful servants. The Emperor would not stoop to anything so petty ; he expressed his thoughts then quite as clearly as, perhaps even more clearly than, at the time of his power.

In 1814, during the campaign in France, he wrote to the Minister of Police :

‘My hair stands on end at the crimes committed by my enemies, and the police takes no

¹² ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xv., p. 214, No. 12,564, March 10, 1807.

¹³ *Ibid.*, t. xvii., p. 21, No. 13,760, April 18, 1808.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, t. xxviii., p. 121, No. 21,837, April 22, 1815.

notice whatever of these facts. I have never been worse served.'¹⁵

Is it necessary to recall here that the Emperor, rightly or wrongly, passed over one of his best Generals, Macdonald, who remained for six years, 1801 to 1807, in disgrace ; that General Dupont, notwithstanding all the efforts that were made to prevent it, was tried by court-martial for his capitulation at Baylen ; that Marshal Bernadotte, Prince of the Empire, was in 1810 disgraced by an Imperial order of the day, calling attention to his carelessness and his deceit at the battle of Wagram, and deprived of his command? Need we recall the dismissals, or rather the temporary disgraces, of Lucien Bonaparte when he was Minister of the Interior ; of Bourrienne, the private secretary ; of Barbé-Marbois, Minister of the Public Treasure ; of Fouché, Minister of Police ; of Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs ; or the dismissal of Portalis, driven in disgrace out of the Council of State for neglecting the orders of his Sovereign ?

The Emperor undoubtedly enjoyed, among his troops, uncontested popularity, but he certainly did not acquire it by means of any compromise with laws or discipline. He feared not to take publicly measures more calculated to alienate from

¹⁵ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxvii., p. 215, No. 21,329, February 21, 1814.

than to gain for him the sympathy and devotion of his officers and soldiers, for all felt that at any moment punishments similar to those we are about to record might fall upon them.

In Egypt, in 1798, some soldiers stole a few bunches of dates from a garden :

‘They shall be paraded twice to-morrow in camp, before the assembled guard, and in the middle of a detachment ; they shall carry the bunches of dates so that all may see them, their coats shall be turned inside out, and on their chests they shall bear placards inscribed with the word “ Marauder.” ’¹⁶

The surgeon Boyer was coward enough to refuse to attend some wounded men supposed to be suffering from an infectious disease :

‘He is unworthy of the position of French citizen. He shall be dressed as a woman and paraded on a donkey through the streets of Alexandria, bearing a placard on his back inscribed with these words : “Unworthy to be a French citizen—he fears death.” ’¹⁷

The First Consul was as angry as the Commander-in-Chief could have been at the conduct of some soldiers who tumultuously penetrated into the citadel of Turin, in spite of their orders to the contrary :

¹⁶ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. v., p. 23, No. 3,406, order of the day, Cairo, September 30, 1798.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, t. v., p. 239, No. 3,818, January 8, 1799.

‘The 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th companies of the 1st Regiment of Artillery are disgraced ; their officers are provisionally suspended from duty ; a report shall be made to the Government upon each one of them ; the flag of the regiment shall be covered with black crape and deposited in the temple of Mars.’¹⁸

¹⁸ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. vii., p. 232, No. 5,701, August 25, 1801.

X.

The Ball at Madame Permon's—Mdlle. Loulou.

THE further one advances in this study, the more is one struck by the constant examples of kindness, and, in place of the cross-grained, disagreeable temper one has been led to expect, one finds a real cordiality and good-humour which much more resemble good - fellowship than royal reserve.

Here is an anecdote related by the Duchesse d'Abrantès,¹ *née* Laura Permon. It is well known that shortly after the death of her husband Madame Permon had received a proposal from Napoleon, which she had declined. Annoyed by her refusal, Napoleon had ceased his visits to her house, where he had formerly been a most frequent guest.

When Laura Permon married General Junot, the friend and aide-de-camp of the First Consul, the Permon family were in great perplexity.

¹ 'Mémoires,' t. ii., pp. 409-413.

They did not know how they could invite the First Consul to the ball, which, according to custom, was to be given within a fortnight of the marriage. It was eventually decided that Junot, his young wife, and her brother should go to the First Consul with a verbal invitation.

We will leave Madame d'Abrantès to tell the story of her reception at the Tuileries :

‘As soon as the door of the study was opened, and the First Consul saw me, he exclaimed, with a good-natured smile :

“What means this family deputation? There is only Madame Permon wanting. Do the Tuileries frighten her, or do I?”

“*Mon Général*,” said Junot immediately, “Madame Permon wished to come with us, but you know how unwell she is, and it was quite impossible for her to come in person to ask a favour of you, which she much hopes you will grant. My wife is commissioned by her mother to make the request in due form.”

‘The First Consul thereupon turned to me, and, smiling at me, said :

“Well, come along; I am listening. What do you want of me?”

‘I repeated to General Bonaparte what had been decided upon between us, and had scarcely finished, when he seized both my hands, and said :

“Of course I will come to your ball. Why did you appear to think I should refuse? I will come, and with great pleasure, moreover.”

‘Then he added a phrase which he has constantly repeated to me since :

“And yet I am going among my enemies, for I hear that your mother’s house is always full of them.”

‘Junot made a sign to Albert and me that it was time to retire. We made our bows, and Napoleon, seizing my brother’s hand as cordially as though we had still been in my father’s house, said :

“By-the-bye, when is this ball?”

‘The date originally fixed was November 10. Napoleon was engaged on that day, and begged us to choose another. He eventually selected the 12th, and it was settled.

“Have you seen Joséphine?” he asked me.

‘I answered in the affirmative, and said that Madame Bonaparte had accepted for herself and her daughter the invitation that my mother, to her regret, had been unable to bring in person.

“Oh, I know that Madame Permon is very unwell,” he said, “but it is chiefly laziness, and something else that I will not mention. Is not that so, Madame Loulou?” [the childish name by which he called Madame Junot]. And he pulled my ears and hair so as to bring tears into my eyes.

‘ On the night of the ball, Junot went to the Tuileries at a quarter to nine to follow the First Consul to my mother’s house. He received a message, however, that he was so busy that he could not say exactly when he would be free; that he begged my mother not to wait for him to begin dancing; and that he promised faithfully to come, at no matter what hour.

‘ Just before eleven we heard in the courtyard the noise of the horses of the First Consul’s escort; soon after his carriage drove up to the door, and almost immediately he appeared at the door of the first drawing-room with Junot and my brother, who had gone down to meet him. My mother advanced towards him, and made him one of her most stately courtesies.

‘ “What! Madame Permon, is it thus that you receive an old friend?” he said with a smile, and giving her his hand.

‘ My mother gave him hers, and they entered the ball-room. The heat was stifling; the First Consul remarked it, but that did not prevent him from keeping on his gray overcoat all through the ball.

‘ “Please order the dance to begin again, Madame Permon,” he said to my mother. “Young people must amuse themselves, and dancing is their favourite pastime. They tell me that your daughter dances like Mdlle.

Chameroi. I want to see her. With your permission, we will dance the *Monaco*; it is the only dance I know."

' "I have not danced for thirty years," said my mother.

' "Come, come; you are joking! You look to-night like your daughter's sister!"'

Is it not charming—this sketch of Napoleon in society, when he was already by acclamation and incontestably the ruler of the whole of France?

Although the memoirs of Madame d'Abrantès are by no means a mere panegyric of Napoleon, and although they undoubtedly deserve more credit than those of many other women, we should have hesitated to reproduce this little scene had we not met other similar documents.

'At Malmaison,' says Constant, 'the company, composed for the most part of young people, of whom large numbers used to be invited, often indulged in games which recalled their school-days. One of their chief amusements was to play at prisoners'-base. It was generally in the afternoon that Bonaparte, Messieurs de Lauriston, Didelot, De Luçay, De Bourrienne, Eugène, Rapp, Isabey, Madame Bonaparte, and Mdlle. Hortense, would divide into two camps, and the prisoners taken and exchanged recalled to the First Consul the great game that was his favourite.

In these games of prisoners'-base the best runners were Mdle. Hortense, Monsieur Eugène, and Monsieur Isabey ; as for General Bonaparte, he often fell down, but would pick himself up again laughing heartily.²

Faithful to our method, we will take from an official document a proof of the authenticity of these stories borrowed from behind the scenes of history.

In a letter dated 1806, between Austerlitz and Jéna, the Emperor, writing to Prince Eugène, says :

‘ I have been spending these last two days with Marshal Bessières ; we played games like boys of fifteen.’³

These two lines, in perfect agreement with contemporary accounts, are like the last touch that gives life to an artist's picture. Henceforward the Emperor, free from cares of State, stands before us a living man ; he becomes once more the friend of his lieutenants, joining in their games with youthful enjoyment. On the occasion of these friendly meetings, he hangs up his Imperial purple in the cloak-room, as in old days he hung up his threadbare cloak when he entered Justat's restaurant, where his dinner cost him threepence !

² ‘Constant, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 24 ; Duchesse d'Abrantès, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iv., p. 348 ; De Ségur, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 200,

³ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xii., p. 285, No. 10,099, April 14, 1806.

XI.

Loans of Money—The Duchesses of Orleans and Bourbon—
The Prince de Conti—The Petition of the Pupil of Saint-Denis.

THE chief feature in an unsociable man ought to be selfishness. Nothing in the foregoing pages proves the existence of this defect in Napoleon ; the sorrow of others moved him, and he always helped them in their troubles with the utmost liberality.

The more we study the proofs of his feelings, the more accessible to pity shall we find him.

‘ The Emperor,’ says the Duchesse d’Abrantès, ‘ was in truth a father to his people in all their needs ; he took care that they wanted for nothing, and cared for them, I repeat, as a father cares for his children.’¹

Indeed, his solicitude knew no limits ; everything was worthy of his attention ; the smallest fact which reached his knowledge attracted and secured his kindly notice ; he required that

¹ ‘ Mémoires,’ t. x., p. 33.

reparation should be made for the smallest injustice to one of his subjects, however lowly he might be.

In 1802, in the middle of the expedition to San Domingo, a treaty (May 20) with the Duke of Wurtemberg had ceded to France the countries on the left bank of the Rhine; moreover, the First Consul was entirely taken up with the reorganization of France. Decrees daily filled the columns of the *Journal Officiel*; he was taking part in the discussions upon the articles of the Civil Code, instituting the Legion of Honour, etc., when the following modest request came under his eyes :

‘Durand, a soldier, heir to Beatrice Poirson, seeks to regain his inheritance, out of which a solicitor at Nancy has tried to cheat him during his absence on service.’

Napoleon wrote on the margin :

‘I desire Councillor of State Régnier to write to some lawyer in the neighbourhood, to look after this affair and to advise as to the steps to be taken in behalf of citizen Durand.’²

In 1805, from Stupinigi, before reaching Milan, whither he was bound for his consecration as King of Italy, the Emperor wrote to the Minister of the Interior :

‘Inquire why the orphan, Mdle. Pays, has been deprived of the inheritance due to her from

² ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. vii., p. 481, No. 6,111, June 1, 1802.

her parents. It is now in the hands of the asylum for the aged.'³

During the interval between the proclamation of his title as Protector of the Germanic Confederation (July 12, 1806) and the preparation of the preliminaries of peace with Russia, the Emperor wrote to the Minister of Police :

'An accident occurred yesterday whereby a coachman, by his own fault it appears, killed a little child. Have him arrested, regardless to whom he belongs, and severely punished.'⁴

His attention was often called to industrial questions. On such occasions he does not simply give the commonplace care of a Sovereign obliged to say something, and contented with vague generalities. He gave a well-thought-out, practical solution, and pointed out the immediate remedy.

In 1810 he dictated the following instructions :

'In order to give work to the manufacturers at Lyons, His Majesty is disposed to order things beyond what are needed for his Palaces. The deputies from Lyons must first let him know to what sum these orders should amount. It will be right to inquire into what can be done for the Lyons manufactories by the rules of the Court. It may be laid down that, in winter, and on

³ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. x., p. 355, No. 8,646, April 28, 1805.

⁴ *Ibid.*, t. xii., p. 547, No. 10,500, July 16, 1810.

occasions of great ceremony, velvet coats are to be worn, and that on other days everybody, except the officers on duty, shall appear at Court without gala dress, but clothed in materials of Lyons manufacture.⁵

Later on we find a loan to the firm of Richard Lenoir,⁶ and one to the firm of Gros-Davilliers,⁷ which received in all a sum of 2,000,000 francs (£80,000).

Meneval relates that 'a senator, Monsieur Laville-Leroux, had obtained from the Emperor a loan of 200,000 francs (£8,000), whereof he repaid half shortly afterwards. The bond for the remaining 100,000 was given by the Emperor to Monsieur Corvisart, in order that he might obtain the sum when Monsieur Laville-Leroux should be in a position to pay it. The Senator died, and it was found that his property was insufficient to cover the debt. Monsieur Corvisart returned the bond to the Emperor, who, not wishing to give him a note of no value, caused the sum to be paid him out of his privy purse.'

The same author tells us that 'Pougens, a printer and bookseller, being ruined in 1803, had recourse, in his distress, to the First Consul, who

⁵ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxi., p. 327, No. 17,227, December 19, 1810.

⁶ *Ibid.*, t. xxi., p. 339, No. 17,247, December 26, 1810.

⁷ *Ibid.*, t. xxi., p. 389, No. 17,339, February 8, 1811.

was then encamped at Boulogne. The courier who brought the letter from Pougens took back with him an order for the loan to him of 40,000 francs (£1,600), repayable in four years. Ten years later half this sum was still due. Napoleon, touched by the energetic efforts made by his debtor, and by his honesty, remitted to him the 20,000 francs yet due, by a decision of April 10, 1813.⁸

‘I could,’ continues Meneval, ‘multiply these proofs of Napoleon’s liberality, and of the delicate manner in which he gave assistance. Apart from his magnificence towards his Generals, I may say that his Ministers and many of his civil servants have had their share in his gifts and have seen their services richly rewarded.

‘I do not speak of the considerable loans that he often made to houses of commerce and to manufactories, of the assistance he gave to overstocked workshops, and to workmen labouring by themselves, with the simple object of procuring them work. These kindnesses absorbed several million francs.’⁹

We may mention here that the First Consul, in 1802, paid the debts of the male dancer Vestris.¹⁰

⁸ Meneval, ‘Souvenirs,’ t. iii., pp. 246, 247.

⁹ *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 248.

¹⁰ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. viii., p. 17, No. 6,291, August 30, 1802.

The sufferings of the working classes, whether arising from bad weather or failure, also had their share in Napoleon's solicitude, whether he was in Paris or elsewhere in Europe.

We take examples of his watchfulness for the interests of the poor from every stage in his career.

In 1802 :

'If the cold returns, like that of 1789, have large fires lighted in the churches and other public places, so as to warm large numbers of people.'¹¹

In 1803 :

'The winter will be severe, Citizen Minister, and meat very dear. We must make work in Paris.

'Continue the works on the Ourcq canal.

'Start works on the Quai D'Orsay and the Quai Desaix.

'Pave the new streets,' etc.¹²

In 1807 :

'Matters ought to be so arranged that we can say : Every beggar shall be arrested. But to arrest him in order to put him in prison would be barbarous or absurd. He must only be arrested in order that he may be taught to earn his livelihood by work. We must start, therefore, one

¹¹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. vii., p. 365, No. 5,923, January 20, 1802.

¹² *Ibid.*, t. viii., p. 520, No. 7,080, September 6, 1803.

or more houses and workshops of charity in each department.¹³

In 1810 :

‘ I am assured that the workmen of Amsterdam and Rotterdam have nothing to do. Let me know what sort of workmen they are and what we can find for them.’¹⁴

In 1811 :

‘ Many hatters, bonnet-makers, shoemakers, tailors, and saddlers, are out of work. I desire you to take steps to have 500 pairs of shoes made daily,’ etc.¹⁵

A few days later he writes to the Minister for War :

‘ Many people are out of work in Paris. As I desire that they should be employed, I wish you first to give a large order for artillery harness,’ etc.¹⁶

At the same time he wrote to the Grand Marshal of the Palace :

‘ The Faubourg Saint-Antoine is in want of work ; I wish to provide it with some, especially during this month which precedes the fêtes. Give such orders that, during the months of May and

¹³ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xvi, p. 1, No. 13,096, September 1, 1807.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, t. xxi, p. 230, No. 17,064, October 19, 1810.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, t. xxii, p. 135, No. 17,683, May 2, 1811.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, t. xxii, p. 145, No. 17,699, May 7, 1811.

June, 2,000 workmen of the Faubourg who make chairs and other furniture, and who are now without work, may be employed at once. Let your plan be ready by to-morrow, and begin without delay.'¹⁷

Will some political intention be suspected in this help given to those in trouble? We can answer best by showing that Napoleon took exactly as much trouble on behalf of isolated individuals who appealed to him.

There was a certain Monsieur Garnier whom Napoleon recommended for employment to the Minister of the Interior, because for a long time he had taken care of the daughter of General Dugommier, under whom Napoleon served at Toulon.¹⁸

There was the son of Camille Desmoulins, received into the Prytanée¹⁹ as 'a victim of the revolutionary tribunal of Paris,' says the order of the First Consul.²⁰

A sum of 100,000 francs (£4,000) was sent to the Duchess of Orleans with the following order :

¹⁷ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxii., p. 145, No. 17,700, May 7, 1811.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, t. vi., p. 464, No. 5,108, September 24, 1800.

¹⁹ Name given to the college of Louis-le-Grand, from 1795 to 1802, and afterwards to the Military College of La Flèche under the First and Second Empires.—*Translator*.

²⁰ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. vi., p. 468, No. 5,117, September 30, 1800.

‘This sum is to be handed to her secretly and without any sort of ostentation.’²¹

During the entire reign, and even in 1815, during the Hundred Days, sums of money were allowed to the Duchess of Bourbon, the Prince de Conti, and the Duchess of Orleans, in addition to the pensions regularly paid them.²²

We have proofs that at every moment, even at those which were most critical for him, the Emperor’s bounty was applied under conditions that would appear improbable had we not documentary evidence in support of the facts.

A certain demoiselle Delaire, pupil at the Imperial School at Saint-Denis, appealed to the Emperor on behalf of her mother. Her entreaty occupied no less than thirty-four lines, in a handwriting so small as to be almost illegible, on foolscap paper.

Napoleon studied this at an hour when he was alone, when all his secretaries were in bed, for it is in his own handwriting that we find this note on the margin :

‘Bertrand shall give her 600 francs (£24), and shall see that her pension is paid regularly.’²³

²¹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. viii., p. 181, No. 6,551, January 18, 1803.

²² *Ibid.*, t. viii., 1803; t. ix., p. 394, 1804; t. xx., p. 29, 1810; t. xxviii., p. 67, 1815.

²³ Collection A. A.

We are thus brought face to face with an action of spontaneous and natural kindness ; there was nothing here connected with policy or popularity. This apparently trifling action gains in importance from the point of view of the man's character, if we consider the circumstances under which it was performed.

We must notice the date upon which the Emperor read and complied with this petition.

It was on April 7, 1815, a fortnight after his return from Elba, at the very moment when the whole of Europe had coalesced and were uniting their forces to march against France, at the very moment when the Emperor, only just returned to the Tuileries, had to create out of nothing the armies which, a few weeks later, were to take part in the supreme and fatal battle of Waterloo.

XII.

Warlike Tastes—Verona—Dresden—The Actor's Art.

IF the human heart may be compared to a lyre, of which each cord represents a virtue or a defect, we may affirm that in Napoleon it was the cord of humanity that vibrated most loudly. We have heard it resound in every key, as the husband, the brother, the son, the friend, the master, the man in prosperity and in adversity. In all these conditions we have found the Emperor endowed with the social virtues which are the honour and the rule of civilization. At his zenith as in trouble, he was always impressionable, kind and helpful.

Critics will exclaim and speak of Napoleon's love for war. How often has he not been represented as liking to wallow in human hecatombs! The same reproach was addressed to Joan of Arc by her judges, and the heroine, raising her eyes to heaven, answered quietly :

'We must speak softly and in a low voice of these exterminations of men.'¹

¹ Joseph Fabre, 'Ephémérides de la Vie de Jeanne d'Arc.'

Indubitably, it is the first duty of a Commander-in-Chief to win the battle, even as it is that of a surgeon to save the life of a patient, whatever means have to be employed for the purpose ; but both would be contemptible if they delighted in the horrors imposed upon them by professional duty.

Let us prove, then, that the Emperor, compelled by his rank to take command during deplorable catastrophes, did so, not in an exulting spirit, as no one dare seriously assume, but with a soul struggling against the compassion inspired by the sight of such sorrows.

At Verona, revolted by the taxes levied by greedy functionaries on the whole population, the First Consul, says Bourrienne, exclaimed :

‘ Let them strike the rich, well and good, though even that is a misfortune, but it is a necessity of war ; but to strike the poor is infamous.’

‘ Bonaparte,’ adds the same author, ‘ ordered that, in exchange for the modest sum of ten francs (8s.), all the objects pledged at the *mont-de-piété* should be restored to their owners, regardless of the value of the object.’²

The day after the battle of Austerlitz Napoleon thus concluded the Thirtieth Bulletin from the Grand Army :

‘ Never was there seen a more horrible battle-

² Bourrienne, ‘ Mémoires,’ t. v., p. 357.

field. From the middle of immense lakes rise the cries of men whom it is impossible to succour.³ My heart bleeds for them. May all the blood that has been shed, may all these misfortunes, rest upon the heads of the perfidious islanders who are the cause of it!⁴

At the summit of his glory, in 1807, the Emperor wrote to the Empress two days after the battle of Eylau:

‘The country is strewn with dead and wounded. It is not the fine side of war. One suffers, and one’s soul is saddened by the sight of so many victims.’⁵

‘The day after the battle of Wagram,’ says the Duke of Rovigo, ‘the Emperor, according to his custom, rode over the battlefield to see whether all the wounded had been carefully picked up. The corn was very high, and it was impossible to see the men lying on the ground. Several of these unfortunate men had tied their handkerchiefs to the end of their muskets and held them in the air to attract attention. The Emperor went in person to every place where he saw these signals, and would not leave the field until the last man had been removed.’⁶

³ Who ordered the artillery to fire upon the ice?

⁴ ‘Bulletins de la Grande Armée,’ t. i., p. 103, Austerlitz, 12 Frimaire, year iv.

⁵ ‘Letters from Napoleon to Joséphine,’ No. xcvi., t. i., p. 264.

⁶ ‘Mémoires,’ t. iv., p. 187.

Here is the evidence of an enemy :

‘On another occasion,’ says Scott, ‘on riding over a battlefield before the wounded had been removed, he expressed keen regret, which was not an unusual thing in him, for he could never bear to see suffering without displaying compassion.’⁷

In 1813, when his star was declining, we find exactly the same language as in the days of his glory, the same sentiments at Dresden as at Verona.

‘My cousin,’ he writes to Berthier, ‘write to the Duke of Padua and tell him that I have received serious complaints of his conduct at Hanau, that he has received from the town the sum of twenty louis (£8) a day. Tell him that he is to restore immediately all that he has received to those who paid it. Write to him confidentially that his conduct has caused me great sorrow, coming as it has done at a time when the people are crushed by billeting soldiers and the expenses of war. Write in the same manner to the Duke of Castiglione, that he is to take nothing and restore the money received.’⁸

When Napoleon’s adversaries light upon a fine action which they cannot pass over in silence,

⁷ Walter Scott, ‘Life of Napoleon Bonaparte,’ vol. vii., p. 204.

⁸ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxv., p. 392, No. 20, 138, June 17, 1813.

they are in the habit of saying that he was a consummate actor, and that all he did was done for effect.

If it is to be an actor to have in the depths of one's heart an ideal of justice, of goodness and of pity, and to compel all one's actions to conform to that standard, it is to be regretted that we are not all actors in the same degree.

But if by actor is meant a man who decides upon his attitude beforehand, according to the effect he wishes to produce, we answer that nothing in Napoleon's life corresponds to that factitious art. The complete absorption of faculties by innumerable and unceasing cares, the necessity of forming on the spot a clear decision, leaves little time for a man to make himself up either morally or physically.

No ; a great captain, worthy of the name, pre-eminently a resolute man, whose thoughts must be quick as a flash of lightning, is not, cannot be, a melodramatic hypocrite.

XIII.

Story of an Aide-de-Camp—From Brienne to St. Helena.

THE moral sincerity of the Emperor, in such a study as we are about to make of it, seems to us beyond all question.

Is that alleging that amongst characteristics so numerous, so conclusive as those we have demonstrated, one never encounters in his nature the weaknesses, the asperities, which are inherent to human imperfection, and to which those persons overwrought by the constant strain of conflicting interests are of all others most subject? Far be it from us to think thus. Napoleon was a mere mortal, with his defects and his merits, and this is all that we desire to establish.

Illuminated by the cluster of rays of light which we shall proceed to throw upon it, we believe that no human heart was ever rendered more transparent to the eyes of posterity.

An incident, commonplace in itself in the life of a General, enables us to penetrate even further into the depths of Napoleon's soul, and we shall

find there the purest friendship pushed almost to superstition.

Muiron, who had been Captain with Bonaparte at the siege of Toulon, afterwards followed him as Colonel aide-de-camp in the Army of Italy, and was killed at his side at the battle of Arcola. Napoleon felt the keenest grief for this friend, whom he had only known three years, and this death left a profound impression upon him and made him eternally grateful. The word is no exaggeration, as we shall see.

In the following letter, Napoleon announced to the widow the death of his aide-de-camp :

‘ Muiron was killed at my side on the battle-field of Arcola. You have lost a husband who was dear to you, I a friend to whom I had long been attached ; but our country loses more than either of us, for she loses an officer as distinguished by his talents as by his courage. If I can be of any service to you or to his child, pray count upon me.’¹

A month later Napoleon addressed himself to the Directory on behalf of the family of his friend :

‘ I ask you, in consideration of the many services rendered in the various campaigns of this war by citizen Muiron, to remove the name of

¹ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. ii., p. 120, No. 1, 199, November 19, 1796.

citizeness Bérault-Courville, his mother-in-law, from the list of *émigrés* whereon it has been placed, though she has never emigrated, as also that of Charles Marie Bérault-Courville, his brother-in-law. The latter was a boy of fourteen when his name was placed upon the list of *émigrés*, and had been sent abroad for purposes of education.²

To appreciate the feelings of noble solicitude that urged Napoleon to wish that Madame Muiron should be surrounded by her near relations, it must be understood that at the death of her husband she was eight months advanced in pregnancy.

On the same day Bonaparte wrote to Madame Muiron :

‘ You will find enclosed, citizeness, a copy of the letter I have written to the Directory in conformity with your wishes. I hope, knowing the interest with which that body looks after the defenders of the country, that it will be taken into consideration. You will also find enclosed six letters of introduction, one for each member of the Directory, and one for the Minister of Police. You had better see General Dupont, who will tell you when your business will be considered, and you will then present these letters. The first time I send an aide-de-camp to Paris, he shall

² ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. ii., p. 208, No. 1,323, December 28, 1796.

bring you assistance for the child. I beg you to believe that under all circumstances you will find me ready to be of use to you.'³

Of the six letters mentioned above, only one has been found, that destined for Carnot. It runs thus :

' I introduce to you, citizen Director, the widow of citizen Muiron, whom that brave young man left when she was enceinte, in order that he might hasten to the defence of his country. I have sent a petition, at her request, to the Directory, and I beg you to take it into consideration.'⁴

Later on, in memory of his friend, Napoleon gave the name of *Muiron* to a Venetian frigate, and chose that ship for his return from Egypt.

' Nineteen years after the death of his aide-de-camp, Napoleon's memory towards his friend was as faithful as during the first days. Neither the splendour of the most exalted throne on earth, nor the fumes of the most prodigious glory of modern times, nor the realization of the marvellous dream which had brought the proudest Sovereigns of Europe to the feet of him who had been a poor scholar at Brienne, and induced the daughter of an Emperor by Divine right to give him her hand—

³ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. ii., p. 209, No. 1,326, December 28, 1796.

⁴ *Ibid.*, t. ii., p. 209, December 28, 1796.

nothing had been able to efface from his memory the recollection of the beloved companion of his youth ; and it was under the name of Colonel Muiron that, in 1815, Napoleon thought of surrendering to the English.⁵

Even later, in exile, a prey to the most atrocious sufferings, tortured by a murderous climate, betrayed, contemned, abandoned by his own people, this prisoner deprived of all joy, separated from his wife and child, this man who was called Napoleon, once more turned his thoughts to poor Muiron, and ten days before his death, April 24, 1821, the Emperor wrote in his own hand these lines :

‘ We bequeath 100,000 francs (£4,000) to the widow, son, or grandson of our aide-de-camp Muiron, killed at our side at Arcola, covering us with his body.’⁶

What can be more rare and more genuine than this simple and pathetic remembrance, this devotion to friendship beyond the tomb, across a whole lifetime of unprecedented splendours and vicissitudes ?

Cast now a retrospective glance over the first chapter of this work, and consider the entire life of Napoleon from Brienne to St. Helena. At

⁵ De Coston, ‘Premières Années de Napoléon,’ t. i., p. 419 ;
‘Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène,’ t. i., p. 29.

⁶ Will made at St. Helena.

whatever moment you consider his conduct with respect to all, towards his own as towards others, towards the great as towards the lowly, you will find nothing but affection, solicitude, compassion, fidelity.

Are not these qualities which will suffice, even in the eyes of the most civilized among us, to make a sociable man?

BOOK V.

GENEROSITY

I.

Governmental Solidarity—Imperial Generosity—Contemporary Opinions—The Conquered Sovereigns—Return of the *Emigrés*.

‘IN the position he made for himself, he had no appearances to keep up ; people only interested him in so far as he could make use of them.’¹

‘He never experienced a generous sentiment ; that it was which made him so distrustful and so immoral.’²

Chaptal has a bad memory. On March 10, year viii, he wrote to Dejean :

‘Bonaparte does exactly the opposite to all governments of our time. They surround themselves with darkness, he establishes himself upon light ; they degrade, he raises and ennobles the dignity of the men he commands.’³

¹ H. Taine, ‘*Origines de la France Contemporaine*,’ ‘*Le Régime Moderne*,’ t. i., p. 84.

² *Ibid.*, t. i., p. 74 ; extract from the ‘*Mémoires Inédits*’ of Monsieur Chaptal.

³ Autograph letter of Chaptal, Lajayette’s Collection, 1860 ; see ‘*L’Amateur d’Autographes*,’ 1863, p. 316 ; and also Count Chaptal’s ‘*Reminiscences of Napoleon*,’ just published.

In 1815 we must presume that fifteen years of rule had not modified Chaptal's opinion, for otherwise it would have been inexcusable in him to give his support to a man who was 'without a generous sentiment, distrustful, and immoral,' yet from whom, nevertheless, he gladly accepted the following titles : Director-General of Commerce and Manufactures, Minister of State, and Peer of France.⁴

In a letter to his brother Louis, King of Holland, Napoleon said :

'I do not separate myself from my predecessors, and regard myself as responsible for them all, from Clovis down to the Committee of Public Safety, and all the harm that is lightly said of governments that have preceded me is said, I consider, with the intention of insulting me.'⁵

During his reign, he would allow no insult to be published either against the former Kings, nor against Marie-Antoinette, nor even against the Comte de Lille (Louis XVIII.). No one ever succeeded in gaining his favour by abusing his predecessors or rivals.

On the other hand, upon the Government of Louis XVIII. must rest the responsibility of

⁴ 'Biographie des Hommes Vivants,' t. iv., p. 309, Paris, 1821.

⁵ Letter from Napoleon to Louis, not published in Napoleon's Correspondence; Felix Rocquain, 'Napoléon I. et le Roi Louis,' p. 229.

having tolerated and encouraged, if not of having instigated, the outrageous diatribes published in our days, an action unworthy of a Bourbon and a Sovereign.

The jingle of the Emperor's spurs had scarcely died away on the road to Elba, in 1814, when the writers, who had but just taken off their Imperial liveries, began to vomit forth abuse of their late master, who at once became a 'Corsican Ogre, a monster of cruelty.'

It is improbable that this animosity existed in the heart of the majority of the people.

Napoleon's triumphal return eleven months later, in 1815, the fact that he retook possession of his throne without firing a cartridge or shedding a drop of blood, certainly tends to prove that the Sovereign, so much abused by many, had retained *some* affection in the hearts of his fellow-countrymen. The fourteen years of the Emperor's reign, therefore, had inspired the French with enthusiasm, if not idolatry, and not with reprobation.

Let us take what Prince Metternich, whose memoirs were not written with the view of enhancing the glory of his Imperial adversary, says :

'In private life he was easy of access, and his indulgence frequently amounted to weakness.'⁶

⁶ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 286.

Hear what Marmont says, who was much more inclined to justify his treachery than to praise Napoleon :

‘ Nature had given him a grateful and kindly, I might almost say tender, heart. This assertion will contradict many established but unjust opinions.’⁷

Farther on the same author says :

‘ Bonaparte was a man most easily touched by genuine feeling,’⁸ and to confirm this opinion, which was strongly rooted in his mind, Marmont says elsewhere :

‘ Bonaparte concealed his sensibility, and was in that very unlike most men, who affect to display it without possessing any. Never was a real sentiment expressed in his presence in vain, nor without touching him acutely.’⁹

Bourrienne, who cannot be accused of partiality, admits, in speaking of the Emperor’s generosity, that :

‘ Napoleon never refuses a favour except where he cannot possibly do otherwise.’¹⁰

Thibaudeau has preserved for us these words taken from the mouth of Joséphine :

‘ He is weaker and more sensitive than anyone believes.’¹¹

⁷ Marmont, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 194. ⁸ *Ibid.*, t. i., p. 282.

⁹ *Ibid.*, t. ii., p. 37. ¹⁰ Bourrienne, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iv., p. 8.

¹¹ Thibaudeau, ‘Mémoires sur le Consulat,’ p. 310.

‘I am less of a Corsican than people think,’ he said himself one day to the Duchesse d’Abrantès, and she carries the idea still further by saying :

‘All that I know of him proves that he possesses a great soul, which quickly forgets injuries.’¹²

The Duke of Bassano gives the same opinion :

‘His heart, naturally good, inclined him to clemency. Not one of those who approached him, whether great or small, will contradict me.’¹³

General Rapp¹⁴ gives similar evidence :

‘He in vain tried to show himself severe ; his nature was too strong for him, and his kindness always got the better of him. Never was man more inclined to indulgence and more sensible to the voice of humanity.’

The Duke of Vicenza is no less strong on this point :

‘Napoleon did not like punishing. His natural disposition inclined him to spare the guilty ; once the first irritation was passed, he generously forgave offences personal to himself. His natural justice inclined him to repair, not by compliments, for he was very chary of them, but by some kind action, any pain he might have caused.’¹⁵

Monsieur de Bausset says :

¹² Duchesse d’Abrantès, ‘Mémoires,’ t. v., p. 53 ; t. vii., p. 74.

¹³ Duke of Bassano, ‘Souvenirs Intimes,’ t. i., p. 188.

¹⁴ ‘Mémoires,’ pp. 6, 9.

¹⁵ Duke of Vicenza, ‘Souvenirs,’ part i., t. i., p. 327 ; part ii., t. i., pp. 278, 324.

‘Once the first feeling of annoyance over, Napoleon always pardoned.’¹⁶

‘He pardoned nothing so quickly,’ says the Duke of Rovigo, ‘as injuries personal to himself.’¹⁷

Finally, in 1814, Baron Fain shows him to us receiving the entreaties of a family imploring a favour :

‘Napoleon could not resist these appeals for mercy ; numerous remissions of punishment attest his clemency.’

In the Island of Elba, speaking to Fleury de Chaboulon of his possible return to France, the Emperor, abandoned and already betrayed by his best friends, exclaimed :

‘I will punish nobody, I wish to forget everything.’¹⁸

And when, on his return to the Tuileries on March 20, 1815, he received, at one and the same time, documents signed by these same prefects and officials, declaring their adhesion to the restored Imperial *régime*, and assurances of fidelity addressed to Louis XVIII., who had taken to flight, the Emperor, filled with pity for these ungrateful men, whom he had formerly loaded with favours, contented himself with shrugging his shoulders and saying :

¹⁶ ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 373.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, t. iv., p. 236.

¹⁸ Fleury de Chaboulon, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 86.

‘Just like mankind. One must laugh at them to keep from crying.’¹⁹

And, suiting his action to his words, he replaced about his person the majority of the Chamberlains, Equerries, and Masters of Ceremonies who had surrounded him in 1814.²⁰

Do these unanimous opinions, drawn from varying sources, show us a surly and inflexible tyrant? And, besides, was he, then, inexorable—he who, following in the wake of his victorious legions, might have overturned all the thrones of the ancient monarchies of Europe?

Did he not give proofs of generosity when he permitted the Sovereigns of Prussia and Austria to retain their thrones after he had conquered their kingdoms? How often did he not display magnanimity to the Czar of Russia, when, both at Austerlitz and Tilsit, he had only to wish in order to ruin the Muscovite power?

It may be said that these are no proofs of kindness; that the abuse of a victory generally only arises from a want of intelligence, and that all these acts of apparent generosity, the result of foresight, and not spontaneous, only reveal political calculation, inspired and dictated by the spirit of government.

It may be so; but he who possesses, and can

¹⁹ Duke of Vicenza, ‘*Souvenirs*,’ t. ii., p. 150.

²⁰ Fleury de Chaboulon, ‘*Mémoires*,’ t. i., p. 189.

apply, such qualities of prevision, of wisdom and moderation, is almost the exact opposite of the infatuated, brutal, tyrannical conqueror who has been represented to us.

If we wish to find examples of minds without generosity, without nobility, we must look to the Sovereigns whose destinies Napoleon had frequently held in his hands.

It was of these Sovereigns, assembled at the Congress of Châtillon, that Napoleon said to Caulaincourt, his Ambassador, in 1814 :

‘ Those people will not treat ; the positions are reversed ; they have forgotten my conduct to them at Tilsit. Then I could have crushed them ; my clemency was simple folly. A school-boy would have done better than I did.’²¹

Did Napoleon, who, it is indisputable, always listened to the prayers of his vanquished enemies, reserve for his own country the evidences of his pitiless despotism ?

As soon as he attained power, the first care of Napoleon was to put an end to the Revolution and to reunite under the one name of Frenchmen those who for ten years previously had only known each other by the malevolent appellations of *émigrés*, terrorists, Jacobins, and royalists. The doors of France, once more thrown open to

²¹ Duke of Vicenza, ‘ Souvenirs,’ by Ch. de Sorr, t. i., p. 182.

more than 80,000 families, bear eloquent witness to this preoccupation of the First Consul.

He did even more ; he scattered his favours without distinction among those who had been his enemies as well as among his friends.

‘Napoleon,’ says Azaïs,²² ‘had but one idea, which was to gather round him, and entrust with important posts, the most remarkable among the men who had not feared to combat his projects and oppose his elevation. The man who dreaded his vengeance found himself summoned to become his supporter.

As were the principles of the First Consul, so were those of the Emperor. Among the 45,000,000 of his subjects, we can count by units those who were ordered by him to quit their country ; and the units are still rarer who, of their own free-will, abandoned France, that land of abomination and despotism as it was called by Napoleon’s enemies.

Countless sons of France, who had wandered as exiles for ten years, were recalled by Napoleon to their homes, which they needed not to leave again, and they prove that under his government France was at any rate inhabitable.

To sum up, what Napoleon was to his conquered foes he was yet more to his subjects.

²² ‘Jugement Impartial sur Napoléon,’ p. 59.

Thus it is proved by a thousand facts that at all times he was reluctant to punish, scrupulous in awarding justice, touching the extremest limits of leniency ; he never ceased to manifest sensibility, usually combined with genial good humour.

II.

Napoleon's Enemies—Generals Clarke and Dessoles—Chénier and Nodier—Bernadotte—Mistakes of the Generals—Marshal Soult—The Portuguese Royal Family.

LET us examine the attitude of Napoleon towards those who were notoriously hostile to him, either at his accession or during his reign.

Here is first of all Gohier, President of the Directory of the 18th Brumaire :

'About two years after the 18th Brumaire Joséphine summoned me from my retreat, and caused me to be appointed Consul-General of France in Holland. . . . I did, as was my duty, all that zeal could do to secure respect for the government of Napoleon.'¹

With these words, after pouring out all the gall with which his soul was saturated, this former Director concludes his memoirs.

After having been the first Minister for War during the Consulate, in spite of the objections of

¹ Gohier, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 334.

the principal collaborators in the *coup d'état*,² Carnot 'since the accession of Napoleon to the Empire had maintained an attitude of pronounced opposition to his government. In 1809 he was in money difficulties, and wrote me a letter,' says Meneval, 'through a certain Monsieur Collignon, a relation of his, to ask the Emperor for the loan of a sum of money necessary to settle his affairs.'³

The same request was made through the Minister for War, as is proved by the following extract from a letter :

To the Minister for War.

'Schönbrunn, June 17, 1809.

'I answer your letter relative to Monsieur Carnot, and the information he has given you respecting the sad state of his affairs. He will always have claims upon my gratitude and interest, and I will make no difficulties about employing him as he desires. Let me know the nature of his embarrassments and what ought to be done to extricate him completely.

(Signed) 'NAPOLEON.'⁴

In order to spare the susceptibilities of his old enemy, the Emperor had the delicacy to cause the

² Miot de Mérito, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 266.

³ Meneval, 'Souvenirs,' t. i., p. 284.

⁴ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xix., p. 219, No. 15,363.

arrears of Carnot's pay as General to be given to him, which produced a sum superior to his needs, and, moreover, he received a pension of 10,000 francs (£400) as a former Minister.⁵

To the honour of Carnot be it said that his gratitude never failed. In 1814 his conduct at Antwerp was admirable, and we find him in 1815 a Count and last Minister of the Interior under Napoleon, as also the last defender of the Empire, and as alone proposing to rally the army behind the Loire.⁶

During the first campaign in Italy, General Clarke was sent 'to observe Bonaparte's conduct secretly, and to communicate on the subject with the Directory.'⁷

'He was even authorized to seize his person, if possible. His object was guessed as soon as he arrived.'⁸

Bourrienne on his side says :

'Bonaparte has often told me that he had no doubt that Clarke had come to Italy with a secret mission to spy upon him, and even arrest him should an opportunity occur.'

Knowing all this as he did, Napoleon never

⁵ Meneval, '*Souvenirs*,' t. i., p. 287 ; see also '*Mémoires*' of the Duchesse d'Abrantès.

⁶ Fouché, '*Mémoires*,' t. ii., p. 368.

⁷ Stendhal, '*Vie de Napoléon*,' p. 212 ; Duc de Rovigo, '*Mémoires*,' t. i., p. 315.

⁸ Arnault, '*Souvenirs d'un Sexagénaire*,' t. iii., p. 45.

bore any grudge against the General. On the contrary, when Clarke fell into disgrace, the Commander-in-Chief took up his defence and made the most of his capabilities.

His first letter to the Directory ran as follows :

‘I must bear witness in favour of General Clarke’s good conduct.’⁹

Next he wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs :

‘I waited, citizen Minister, to write to you about General Clarke until you had written to me. I will not inquire as to whether it is true that he was sent out originally to act as a spy upon me. If it be so, I alone have any reason to be offended, and I declare that I forgive him. It is not in accordance with our dignity that he should fall into misery, and be proscribed and disgraced.

‘I am told that he has written a great deal of harm of me. If that be true, he wrote to the Government, and had the right to do so ; it might even have been necessary, and in no case do I think it can be made a reason for proscribing him.

‘I beg you therefore to use your influence with the Government in behalf of General Clarke ; a post as Minister to some minor Court might be found for him.’¹⁰

⁹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. iii., p. 308, No. 2,219, September 18, 1797.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 343, No. 2,260, September 26, 1797.

In order to further support this step, he wrote to the Directory when Clarke was summoned to Paris.

‘General Clarke, who is on his way to Paris, has been employed for several months in Italy. He is a hard worker and an upright man. If he needs indulgence, I pray you to show it him. General Clarke is a good man.’¹¹

To finish the story, let us add that, ‘when the 18th Brumaire was completed, Napoleon summoned Clarke, by semaphore, to come to him from a little property he owned near Strasburg. He restored him to the Topographical Office, and lodged him at the Tuileries. He afterwards appointed him Ambassador, made him Governor of Vienna and of Berlin, Minister for War and a Duke, and finally, when his daughter married, he gave her a dowry out of the civil list.’¹²

There is also a letter, written in 1809 by the Emperor to General Clarke, Duc de Feltre, and Minister for War :

‘It seems to me inconvenient for you to take the title of Duc d’Hunebourg, but I see no reason why you should not keep the title of Comte d’Hunebourg, and add to it that of Duc de Feltre.’¹³

¹¹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. iii., p. 346, No. 2,372, November 15, 1797.

¹² Duc de Rovigo, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 326.

¹³ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xx., p. 24, No. 15,989, October 30, 1809.

Others too, whose fortunes were similar, were at one time hostile to Napoleon : Davoût, 'while in Egypt, was in league with all those who boasted of being Napoleon's enemies.'¹⁴

The favours of the Emperor towards him are well known, the large presents of money that he received, as well as the titles of Prince of Eckmühl and Duke of Auerstadt.

There was also Colonel Mouton, who opposed the elevation of Napoleon to the throne, and who nevertheless became Count Lobau.¹⁵

Mouton, on the day of the proclamation of the Empire, cried : 'Silence in the ranks!' when his soldiers tried to cheer the new Sovereign.¹⁶

There was Colonel Foy, who refused his vote to the Empire and was compromised in the affair of Moreau and Pichegru,¹⁷ and yet he was appointed General of Brigade, and afterwards General of Division, and received, on his return from Portugal, a present of 20,000 francs (£800).¹⁸

M. de Colbert, too, after having openly espoused the cause of Kléber against Bonaparte in Egypt, was loaded with benefits and made a General.¹⁹

¹⁴ Duchesse d'Abrantès, 'Mémoires,' t. v., p. 53.

¹⁵ Meneval, 'Souvenirs Historiques,' t. iii., p. 103.

¹⁶ De Ségur, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 284.

¹⁷ Marmont, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 218.

¹⁸ Meneval, 'Souvenirs Historiques,' t. iii., p. 254.

¹⁹ Duchesse d'Abrantès, 'Mémoires,' t. v., p. 53.

There was General Dessoles, a friend of Moreau, of whom Napoleon said in 1805 :

‘He makes extraordinary speeches which prove the existence of a little *clique* as malignant as it is cowardly.’²⁰

Dessoles sent in his resignation, but that did not prevent him from obtaining a division in Spain in 1808. He again sent in his papers, but the Emperor, who would not despair, appointed him chief of the staff on one of his armies in 1812. Dessoles once more quitted the army on the pretext of health, and, with the ‘malignant *clique*,’ awaited the return of the Bourbons, to whom he became Minister for War.²¹

A great deal has been said about the pretended persecution of Joseph Chénier and Charles Nodier. The first, notwithstanding his writings against the Emperor, was inspector of the Imperial University. Napoleon paid his debts and gave him a pension.²²

The second of these victims did not disdain to wear the Imperial livery as Governor-General of Illyria.²³

We must still mention Monsieur Dufresne, who, despite his well-known connection with the

²⁰ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xi., p. 97, No. 9,088, August 17, 1805.

²¹ Meneval, ‘Souvenirs Historiques,’ t. iii., p. 189; and see also ‘Recollections of Marshal Macdonald.’

²² *Ibid.*, t. i., p. 243.

²³ *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 72.

Bourbons,²⁴ was Bonaparte's first Minister of Finance. After his death, his bust was placed in the Treasury by order of Napoleon.²⁵

The list of pseudo-martyrs, all avowed enemies of Napoleonic institutions, whose sufferings were not revealed until the fall of the Empire, and who, as long as it lasted, lived in luxury on the liberality of the tyrant, might be interminably continued. No one need be surprised at this if they remember that Napoleon had a mania for choosing his officials from among his adversaries.

The history of Bernadotte is typical. Before, during, and one might say after, the Empire, Bernadotte was Napoleon's enemy. The latter, however, gave such proofs of his untiring generosity, that they were only surpassed by the ingratitude of their object.

Bernadotte was opposed to the *coup d'état* of the 18th Brumaire, and during that day his attitude was one of expectation. As a former War Minister under the Directory, he was prepared to play an important part in case Napoleon failed in his enterprise.

Next day he condescended to approve, but in the depths of his heart he retained a desire to occupy the first place in the State, a desire

²⁴ Miot de Mérito, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 266.

²⁵ Meneval, 'Souvenirs Historiques,' t. iii., p. 144.

which was constantly kept alive by his jealousy of Napoleon, who had succeeded.

‘Bernadotte,’ says Meneval,²⁶ ‘obsequious as he was towards Napoleon, never ceased conspiring against him.’

‘He was the soul,’ says Fouché,²⁷ ‘of the conspiracy known as the Conspiracy of the Senate in 1802, which had for its object the overthrow of the First Consul.’

Madame de Staël, a friend of Bernadotte, affirms this fact :

‘A party formed around General Bernadotte who wished to know if they could do nothing.’²⁸

Châteaubriand makes the same allegation :

‘Madame Récamier undertook to bring together two men of importance at that time in France, Bernadotte and Moreau, to see if they could join against Bonaparte. They were frequently at her house.’²⁹

Bignon says :

‘The hero of this party, or rather of this set, was General Bernadotte.’³⁰

The Duc de Rovigo assures us that he was the chief of these meetings, at which he assisted,

²⁶ ‘Souvenirs Historiques,’ t. iii., p. 65.

²⁷ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 136.

²⁸ ‘Dix Ans d’Exil,’ p. 56.

²⁹ ‘Mémoires d’Outre-Tombe,’ t. iii., p. 251 ; Duchesse d’Abrantès, ‘Histoire des Salons de Paris,’ t. iii., p. 344.

³⁰ ‘Histoire de France,’ t. i.

although connected with the family of Bonaparte, and at which 'they used to discuss means for getting rid of the First Consul.'³¹

Bonaparte forgave him, thanks to the intervention of Joseph; it was the second time since the 18th Brumaire.³² It was not the last, for, according to Thibaudeau, 'Bernadotte passed his life in quarrels with the First Consul, and in seeking to make them up.'³³ Marmont also declares that 'Bernadotte had, on more than one occasion, taken part in more or less culpable intrigues against the First Consul.'³⁴

General Marbot gives a most detailed account of the conspiracy of Bernadotte when he was Commander-in-Chief of the *corps d'armée* of the West.³⁵ We are thus brought face to face with a man hostile to Napoleon, whose hostility, moreover, was not Platonic, since it went as far as conspiracy.

Everybody knows what Napoleon did for Bernadotte; he was one of the first Marshals and Grand Officers of the Empire; he was Prince of Ponte Corvo, and the recipient of fabulous sums of money. But, notwithstanding all that, he did not suspend hostilities against his benefactor for

³¹ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 434.

³² Fouché, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 240.

³³ 'Mémoires sur le Consulat,' p. 321.

³⁴ 'Mémoires,' t. iii., p. 269.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, t. i., pp. 152, 165.

one instant, though that his proceedings were well known is proved by the following letter, dated from Schönbrunn, September 11, 1809, and addressed to the Minister for War :

‘It is my intention to leave the command no longer in the hands of the Prince of Ponte Corvo, as he continues to correspond with the intriguers in Paris, and is a man in whom I can have no confidence.’³⁶

A year later we have a second letter :³⁷

‘Monsieur le Comte de Mollien, give 1,000,000 francs (£40,000) out of the military chest to the Prince of Ponte Corvo ; it shall be settled later.’

Are not these two letters instructive, coming one after the other ? And what a *pendant* to the Marshal’s bâton, obtained after the Conspiracy of the Senate, is the 1,000,000 francs of 1810 ! We must add that, according to Count Mollien, the Emperor was obliged to take the sum out of his civil list in consequence of a discussion with his Minister.³⁸

This present was made to Bernadotte on the occasion of his departure for Sweden, whither he was called as Crown Prince by a vote of the Diet.

This was not Napoleon’s only attention to him.

³⁶ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xix., p. 453, No. 15,785.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, t. xxi., p. 118, No. 16,906, September 15, 1810.

³⁸ Mollien, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 17.

Writing upon the question of retaking the principality of Ponte Corvo, he says :

‘As I wish to treat the Prince favourably, it appears to me that the simplest way would be to give him a pension.’³⁹

Did the Emperor really care to treat Sweden tenderly? Of what weight was Sweden in 1810 as compared with France? Very small, a *quantité négligeable* indeed. Moreover, if we may believe Talleyrand, ‘it was a desire to please Napoleon that brought about Bernadotte’s election as Crown Prince.’⁴⁰

The proceedings of the Emperor towards Bernadotte in 1804 and 1810 were spontaneous, as they were in 1797 towards Clarke. He forgot personal injuries, and rewarded talent even in his enemies.

If the excessive bounties and indulgences of which Bernadotte was the object surprise us, we shall again find an explanation in sentiment.

Bernadotte had married Désirée Clary, Napoleon’s first love, and had thereby become Joseph Bonaparte’s brother-in-law. Had Napoleon consulted only his personal interest, which commanded him, perhaps, to retain near him a General of some merit, he would have been contented with keeping Bernadotte in semi-

³⁹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxi., p. 314, No. 17,201, December 12, 1810.

⁴⁰ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 11.

obscurity, whither Sweden would never have come in search of him. The Emperor, in thus acting, would have spared himself the evidence of the blackest ingratitude; he would have spared France the shame of seeing, in the front rank of her enemies, one of her own children, who even did his utmost to incite Napoleon's allies to treachery,⁴¹ and who profited by the first successes of the coalition, of which he was the smallest satellite, to lay hands upon the pensions belonging to his old companions-in-arms.⁴²

Bernadotte had the satisfaction of despoiling his comrades, after having tried on all occasions to eclipse them, as is proved by the celebrated lecture that he drew down upon himself from Napoleon the day after Wagram, in connection with the order of the day, wherein the Marshal attributed to himself the credit of a decisive intervention, to the prejudice of Davoût.

The infamy of Bernadotte's conduct is summed up in this proclamation of 1814, wherein, in the name 'of a French hero, who formerly fought for France,' the invaders threatened 'to hand over our entire population to a vengeance equal to that of the Cossacks.'⁴³

⁴¹ Baron Fain, 'Manuscrit de 1813,' t. ii., p. 357.

⁴² *Ibid.*, t. i., p. 446.

⁴³ Bail, 'Correspondance de Bernadotte avec Napoléon,' p. 156.

We may mention here that General Simon and Colonel Pinoteau, compromised in the plot of the Army of the West, and sent on that account to the Isle of Rhé, were spared by the Emperor and re-entered the service ; the Colonel became a General, and the General died a pensioner of the Empire.⁴⁴

Now let us see what was the Emperor's conduct with regard to serious faults committed by Generals in his service.

General Solignac, in the exercise of his command, was guilty of malversations amounting to not less than 6,000,000 francs (£240,000).⁴⁵ On this subject Napoleon writes :

‘ I have dismissed General Solignac. You will notify to him his dismissal, and you will add that I know, in every detail, all the money he has received, both for himself and for others ; that he must, without delay, restore all that has been to his profit ; that the Emperor, who does not wish to be unnecessarily severe in his measures, will go no further in the matter provided that these sums are promptly repaid into the military chest, but that if General Solignac delays to do this he will at once be brought before a court-martial as having turned to his own profit

⁴⁴ General Marbot, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 167.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 18.

the sums destined for the pay and rewards of the men.⁴⁶

This General, it appears, found restitution difficult, for it needed no less than three letters from the Emperor to decide him to make up his mind to it.

We may add that in 1815 Solignac was one of the first to demand, in the Chamber of Representatives, the abdication of the Emperor.⁴⁷

Neither had Masséna anything to complain of in Napoleon's treatment of him. The latter writes :

'Masséna is good for nothing in a civil Government. In the first place, he is incapable of attachment. He is a good soldier, but entirely given up to love of money ; it is the only motive power that makes him act even under my eyes. He began by small sums ; now millions would not satisfy him.'⁴⁸

These exactions are confirmed by Fouché.⁴⁹

'Masséna, an intrepid marauder, was the secret enemy of the Emperor, who had made him disgorge 3,000,000 francs' (£120,000).

On more than one account he needed great

⁴⁶ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xii., p. 253, No. 10,045, April 1, 1806.

⁴⁷ General Petit, 'Souvenirs Militaires de l'Histoire Contemporaine,' p. 230.

⁴⁸ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xii., p. 430, No. 1,031, to the King of Naples, June 3, 1806.

⁴⁹ 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 87.

indulgence, for, according to Marmont, 'Masséna was absorbed during the whole of the day of Busaco in attentions unworthy of an old soldier like him.'⁵⁰

The duchy of Rivoli and the principality of Essling were the punishments meted out by Napoleon to his lieutenant, who was full of merit, we must admit, on the field of battle.

Every individual, every circumstance, drew from the pen of the Emperor the same sentiments, the same tendency to relent after the impulse which might have led him to punish with exemplary severity.

Gouvion Saint-Cyr thought fit to leave his post in the middle of a campaign, before the arrival of Marshal Augereau, who was to replace him. Napoleon writes :

'I am indignant at learning that General Gouvion Saint-Cyr has abandoned his troops. If he has quitted the army without authorization, and without having made over his command to a Marshal, you will give orders for his arrest. Spare him this disgrace, however, if you can, and make him understand how extraordinary his conduct has been.'⁵¹

Belliard preferred to resign rather than obey orders.

⁵⁰ 'Mémoires,' t. iv., p. 25.

⁵¹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xx., p. 1, No. 15,958, to the Minister for War, October 19, 1809.

‘Answer,’ writes the Emperor to Berthier,⁵² ‘to General Belliard that you have not laid his letter before me ; that he had, beyond a doubt, lost his head when he wrote it ; that to offer to resign on account of not having executed my orders is equivalent to a declaration that he will not obey ; that he has incurred capital penalties by so doing. Tell him that these 3,000 men and 1,200 horses might have saved the Army of the South ; that he is very culpable ; that he might have evacuated Cuenca or any other place, but that he ought to have obeyed the Emperor’s orders. Say, further, that his letter contains several passages unworthy of a soldier ; that had you laid them before His Majesty his arrest would have been ordered instantly, and an example made of him for this breach of military discipline ; that out of consideration for the friendship you bear him, and his long services, you have not brought these unseemly expressions to the knowledge of the Emperor, and that you have limited yourself to informing him that his orders had been carried out.’

In this case we see that not only did Napoleon shrink from punishing, but also that, in order to avoid doing so, he consented to allow that his authority had been slighted, and that Berthier had lied to him !

⁵² ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxii., p. 215, No. 17,782, June 8, 1811.

In 1813, upon the subject of the defence of the stronghold of Thorn, he says :

‘I send you the report of the commission charged to inquire into the conduct of the Governor of Thorn. Write to General Poitevin that his defence was quite out of order, and that there were good grounds for expecting better things from him. You will add, however, that I have not wished him to be condemned, and that he is to return to his post.’⁵³

In 1809, when Soult was in command of the Army of Portugal, the idea one day occurred to him that he would like to become King of the country.

‘To wish to force the Emperor’s hand in order to seize upon a throne,’ says Marmont,⁵⁴ ‘was a notion that had never entered anyone’s head before that of Marshal Soult.’

By his private authority, Soult collected a body at Oporto to pronounce the fall of the House of Braganza, and to ask for a new sovereign from the Emperor, giving him, of course, clearly to understand that the most popular selection he could make would be that of Soult. From these extra-military combinations arose some disorganization in the army, to the profit of the enemy.⁵⁵

⁵³ Charavay Collection, No. 7,103, July 24, 1813.

⁵⁴ ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 259.

⁵⁵ Marmont, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 260 ; Marbot, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 364.

When Napoleon received news of these ambitious proceedings, of which the least harm was that they introduced an element of discord into the army, he was seized, as may be supposed, with a violent fit of rage, and wrote himself to Soult as follows :

‘ Had you taken possession of the supreme power for yourself, it would have been a crime which would have obliged me, notwithstanding my attachment to you, to regard you as guilty of high-treason, and of having attempted to subvert my authority. I have seen with grief that you have allowed yourself to be surprised at Oporto, and that my army, without a blow, has fled almost without baggage or artillery.’

What punishment was inflicted upon Soult for faults so grave in their consequences? The end of the same letter tells us :

‘ Nevertheless, after having long considered the steps I should take, I have been swayed by my affection for you, and the services you rendered me at Austerlitz and elsewhere. I forget the past—I hope it will serve as a warning to you—and I confide to you the post of Major-General of my Army of Spain.’⁵⁶

⁵⁶ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xix., p. 528, No. 15,871, September 26, 1809.

III.

Mistakes of Subaltern Officers—Captain Daugier—Hesitation to be Angry—Light Punishments—Privates—English Prisoners.

It may perhaps be alleged, in presence of these proofs of kindness on the part of the Emperor, that he acted as he did because he needed the services of Generals difficult to replace. This supposition would not be without weight if Napoleon had only shown himself weak towards the Generals, but we are now going to prove that his feelings towards the other officers, the subalterns, and even private soldiers, were similar.

When Captain Daugier of the marines sent in his resignation, Napoleon wrote to the Minister of Marine :

‘ Is there no French blood to be found in any veins nowadays? I return you Captain Daugier’s letter, and you will tell him that you have not submitted it to me, for I cannot tell what I should do. You know it is the second time that

Daugier has resigned his commission during the war.¹

In the following year Daugier repeated his resignation.

‘Let this officer know,’ answers Napoleon, ‘that I can never respect an officer who resigns in time of war.’²

Shortly afterwards was written yet another letter to Admiral Decrès, Minister of Marine :

‘I thought that Monsieur Daugier was at his post, and that he had been there for a long time. What are naval officers doing in Paris? Cannot a captain of a ship be at sea except when I am there?’³

Thus, in presence of this supreme Chief, supposed to be impossible to deal with, an officer was able, on several occasions, to send in his papers in time of war, to draw down upon himself various observations, without being punished, and without even losing the confidence of the Emperor, for in 1806 he writes :

‘Send Captain Daugier to the Viceroy at Venice, and tell him to visit the ports of Istria and Dalmatia, so that I may have in Paris someone who can give me trustworthy information.’⁴

¹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. x., p. 11, No. 8,091, October 6, 1804.

² *Ibid.*, t. x., p. 225, No. 8,435, March 15, 1805.

³ *Ibid.*, t. x., p. 338, No. 8,616, April 23, 1805.

⁴ *Ibid.*, t. xii., p. 469, No. 10,369, June 14, 1806.

Two officers who had been dismissed for gambling with some privates addressed a remonstrance to the Commander-in-Chief, who replied :

‘Taking into consideration the position of these officers, it is my wish that you should put both of them, with the rank and pay of captain, into a place, and if, at the end of the campaign, their conduct has been good, I will attach them to a half-brigade.’⁵

The Minister proposed to remove the General of Brigade Moreau. ‘Before dismissing him,’ wrote Bonaparte, ‘you must find him a local command suited to his rank.’⁶

An officer was proved to hold communications with Hyde de Neuville, one of the most famous and most incorrigible Royalist conspirators. The Emperor thus notifies the fact to General Moncey :

‘General Moncey, here is a letter in which Major Clément is compromised and denounced by a prefect ; let me know your opinion. In any case it would be well to send this officer elsewhere, as he is in communication with that miserable Hyde.’⁷

⁵ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. v., p. 276, No. 3,895, January 23, 1799.

⁶ This service was ill repaid, however, by General Moreau in 1814.

⁷ *Ibid.*, t. x., p. 77, No. 8,228, December 22, 1804.

An aide-de-camp of the Viceroy of Italy lost some despatches of the Emperor's; this was, of course, an extremely grave matter, and the culprit could not expect to escape easily.

'Your aide-de-camp, Bataille, has lost my despatches for me,' writes Napoleon. 'He deserves to be punished. Put him under arrest for a few days. An aide-de-camp may lose his breeches on a journey, but not his sword or his papers. Those with which your messenger was charged were not so large that he could not place them inside the carriage and under his eye; had he done so, he would not have lost them. All these fellows are feather-heads.'⁸

The care that Napoleon takes to give his reason for ordering so light a punishment is worth noting.

A Major-General asks for the dismissal of the Major in command at Liegnitz, who demanded from the magistrates 1,000 francs a month (£40) for the expenses of his table.

'Put him under arrest for a fortnight,'⁹ answers the Emperor.

His manner of dealing with officers of the lowest rank was exactly the same.

'Write to Corporal Bernaudat, of the 13th

⁸ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xvi., p. 16, No. 13,125, September 7, 1807.

⁹ *Ibid.*, t. xxv., p. 409, No. 20,156, June 10, 1813.

Regiment of the line, that he is not to drink any more, and to behave better. It seems that the cross was given him because he is a brave man. But it must not be taken from him because he is too fond of wine. Make him realize, however, that he is wrong in putting himself into such a condition as to disgrace the decoration he wears.¹⁰

The Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour proposes to disgrace a member of the order, a sergeant in a company of the reserve, because he has become dangerous by reason of his insubordination and bad conduct :

‘The Grand Chancellor,’ answers Napoleon, ‘will write and warn him to behave better in future.’¹¹

Monsieur de Lacépède announced that he was sending back to France, under escort, a soldier decorated for a fine action, but whose insubordination had caused his expulsion from the regiment to which he belonged.

‘Let him come in liberty to Paris,’ is the answer, ‘where the Grand Chancellor shall interrogate him. As the decoration was given to him for a fine action I do not wish to take it from him. Try to conciliate the interests of this brave fellow with good discipline.’¹²

¹⁰ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xv., p. 273, No. 12,660, May 27, 1807.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 464, No. 12,971, August 2, 1807.

¹² *Ibid.*, t. xvi., p. 304, No. 13,522, February 3, 1808.

‘You have in the Light Cavalry a man named Galuppo, from Chiavari, who has written to his father that he is badly used in the Guard, that they give him soup and black bread fit for dogs, and at night cakes made of horse-beans.’

Here, undoubtedly, is grave reason for repression, not brutal, but such as is indispensable to good order and discipline. Did Napoleon call down the wrath of the Colonel on this man, or did he merely direct him to punish him forthwith, according to rule? Neither. He contented himself by concluding his letter with these words: ‘See what that young man wants.’

A soldier had been dismissed from his regiment for misconduct.

‘I have received,’ writes Napoleon, ‘your report of the 11th relative to Gautier of the 16th Light Infantry. I do not doubt that he will keep the promise he has made you. Restore him to his regiment, in which I hope he will soon earn promotion. Write in this sense to the Colonel.’¹³

As we must limit our examples, we will relate, in proof of the generous instincts of Napoleon towards soldiers of every kind, a fact concerning private soldiers, but this time English, and not French. We will leave the Emperor to tell the story in his own language:

¹³ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xvii., p. 140, No. 13,903, May 16, 1808.

(New observation; and then
ask what made him great??)

'As I was passing through Givet, a detachment of English prisoners were at work erecting a swinging bridge. Among the number, I* specially noticed the zeal and activity of eight or ten, who jumped into a boat to help in making the bridge work. Give orders that the position of these ten men be inquired into, that they be given new clothes and five napoleons apiece (£4), with a passport to Morlaix, where they will be handed over to the *Transport-office*¹⁴ (*sic*), and explain how they obtained their freedom. There is there an English clergyman who came to me and asked leave to go and spend three months in England. Let him have permission. He will be able to look after the others.'¹⁵

¹⁴ The Cartel (?).

¹⁵ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxiii., p. 6, No. 18,250, to the Minister for War, November 12, 1811.

Bourienne

IV.

Civil Officials—An Unhappy Comrade—Embassy to Hamburg
—Persistent Indulgence of Napoleon—Pardon offered to
George Cadoudal.

It may be said that the Emperor had a special weakness for soldiers. In answer to this observation we shall continue our investigations through all classes of civil society.

As we have seen in the first part of this work, Bourrienne was Napoleon's fellow-student at the school at Brienne; we have seen, too, how Napoleon, at the outset of his career, tightened by every means the bonds of comradeship. Bourrienne was the intimate private secretary of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Italy, and of the Army of Egypt, as later of the First Consul. Bourrienne, who no doubt thought himself irremovable on account of this friendship dating from boyhood, displayed in the exercise of his duties the most brazen corruption and dishonesty.

All contemporary memoirs agree upon this

point. 'The secretary is for sale,' says one of the members of the secret royal council in a report to Louis XVIII. in exile.¹

Miot de Mérito² speaks of the 'peculations of Bourrienne and other subordinate scoundrels whom he employed.'

The Duchesse d'Abrantès relates how useful Bourrienne was to Joséphine in helping her to buy jewellery unknown to Bonaparte. These purchases were supposed to be presents from Bourrienne, and this was true to a certain extent; but the latter never paid the money except in exchange for recommendations to the Minister for War, destined to obtain from him some contracts for military supplies.³

Fouché tells us that 'Bourrienne kept me exactly informed of all Bonaparte's movements, for a monthly payment of 25,000 francs' (£1,000).⁴

Such was the personage to whose proceedings Napoleon shut his eyes, until the day when the house of Coulon Brothers, cavalry equipment providers, failed for 3,000,000 francs (£120,000). It then transpired that Bourrienne was both partner in and patron of the house.⁵

¹ Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien,' t. i., p. 417.

² 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 301.

³ Duchesse d'Abrantès, 'Mémoires,' t. iv., p. 332.

⁴ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 188.

⁵ Meneval, 'Souvenirs Historiques,' t. iii., p. 28; Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien,' t. ii., p. 375.

It will be allowed that to compromise in this manner the dignity of the First Consul was a very bad return for all his kindnesses.

In spite of all Napoleon's forbearance, it was impossible for him to retain Bourrienne; he therefore sent him away, but took every precaution, every care to safeguard, as far as possible, the honour of his secretary.

'Citizen,' Bonaparte wrote to the Government treasurer, 'you will pay citizen Bourrienne his salary until the 6th Brumaire; from that day he will cease to be employed by me, having been promoted to other duties.'⁶

Bourrienne's disgrace did not last long. The First Consul could not bear the thought that his friend, who had been so guilty towards him, was unhappy.

In 1804 he charged Bourrienne to follow the debates connected with the trial of Moreau, and to send him a report of each sitting.⁷

Shortly afterwards, on March 22, 1805, the Emperor appointed him Minister Plenipotentiary at Hamburg.⁸ In this post he was not long without recommencing his extortions. He did worse: he betrayed to the Bourbons the cause of

⁶ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. viii., p. 78, No. 6,394, October 28, 1802.

⁷ Meneval, 'Souvenirs Historiques,' t. iii., p. 29.

⁸ Bourrienne, 'Mémoires,' t. vi., p. 256.

the Emperor his benefactor. Napoleon knew it, and yet Bourrienne was never arrested, nor did he ever suffer any punishment either for his great or his little sins. All that Napoleon did was to write this letter :

‘ Monsieur de Champagny, express to the *sieur* Bourrienne my displeasure at his sending you no account of the steps taken by the King of Westphalia at Hamburg.’⁹

Somewhat later, more serious grounds of reproach having come to his knowledge, Napoleon writes :

‘ I understand that the *sieur* Bourrienne has made between 7,000,000 and 8,000,000 francs (£290,000) at Hamburg by delivering permits and making arbitrary stoppages.’

After this scandalous relapse, we might expect a decree of recall ; it would not have been severity, it would have been simple justice ; but the Emperor is satisfied with adding :

‘ It is my intention to compel all who have received sums of money without my consent to make restoration, and to employ this money in public works.’¹⁰

A few months later the treason itself was brought to light, and we have the following letter :

⁹ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xix., p. 543, No. 15,890, October 2, 1809.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, t. xxi., p. 346, No. 17,257, January 1, 1811.

‘Monsieur le Duc de Bassano, I send you some very important documents relating to the *sieur* Bourrienne. I beg you to make me a report, and to treat these papers as absolutely confidential, as the matter requires the utmost secrecy. Everything tends to make me believe that that individual is in secret communication with London. Bring me your report this evening.’¹¹

Napoleon was not mistaken. These very words were written by Bourrienne to Talleyrand a few days after the abdication at Fontainebleau :

‘Even when I was so close to the Emperor, I always desired the return to France of that excellent prince, Louis XVIII., and his august family.’¹²

Bourrienne has taken the impudent precaution to tell us what were the first words addressed to him at Saint Ouen by Louis XVIII., on May 2, 1814 :

‘Ah! Monsieur de Bourrienne, I am very glad to see you,’ said the King. ‘I know what services you have rendered us both in Hamburg and Paris : I shall be delighted to prove to you my gratitude.’¹³

¹¹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxiii., p. 104, No. 18,364, December 25, 1811.

¹² Autograph letter from Bourrienne to Talleyrand, April 13, 1814, Charavay Collection, 1853 (1863-1858).

¹³ Bourrienne, ‘Mémoires,’ t. x., p. 241.

The whole time threats were the only weapons employed by the Emperor against Bourrienne, who continued his criminal manœuvres.

In 1813 Napoleon wrote to the Major-General of the Grand Army :

‘Give orders to the commandant of the 32nd military division to make Monsieur Bourrienne quit Hamburg and the said military division immediately. He is to return to France within twenty-four hours of the receipt of this order under pain of arrest.’¹⁴

Here is another letter of the same year, to Marshal Davoût. Nothing has changed, neither Bourrienne’s conduct nor Napoleon’s indulgence :

‘I have given positive orders to the *sieur* Bourrienne to cease holding any communication whatever with Hamburg. My order will be signified to him between now and July 5. If he should write again after that date, I desire that you should inform me, so that I may have him arrested. Try to discover all the knaveries of this scoundrel, so that I may compel him to restore what does not belong to him.’¹⁵

In this hesitation to punish so untrustworthy a person, we have indulgence transformed into weakness. It cannot be said that the Emperor

¹⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxiv., p. 150, No. 19,084, August 11, 1813.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, t. xxv., p. 414, No. 20,203, June 30, 1813.

acted thus because he required to keep men of mark in his Government ; we may suppose that it would have been easy to find in France someone who could have been sent to Hamburg, and who would have done his duty better than this incurable intriguer.

Although Napoleon, yielding to the noble weakness of his heart, would never raise his hand against his old comrade, justice eventually overtook him.

After enjoying for a short space the fruits of his treachery, and after having been Postmaster-General and Minister of State under Louis XVIII., Bourrienne was compelled to flee in disgrace to Belgium, escorted by the execrations of his creditors.¹⁶

We might almost close here the enumeration of the Emperor's acts of generosity, as the proof seems clear. But the historian must remember that, in face of posterity, Napoleon stands in the position of a man who has been publicly accused of a crime. One word has been enough to blacken his character ; we must produce fifty witnesses to rehabilitate it.

We must, then, produce further testimony, in order that the proof may be complete. We must bring forward all the acts, great and small, of the Emperor's life.

What did he do to a prisoner charged with

¹⁶ Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien,' t. ii., p. 375.

having used a threat against the First Consul? Here is his decision: 'Send to the Minister of Police to have him set at liberty, if there is no other complaint against him.'

Take the case of Moreau, Pichegru, and Georges, to which we shall refer again presently, as it is one of the principal features of the calumnies that have been directed against Napoleon.

Read in what terms he grants mercy to Polignac, condemned to death:

'We could not help being touched by the grief of Madame Armand de Polignac. We remembered, moreover, that we had been intimate at school with this young man, in days of early childhood, and it is not surprising that he should have forgotten it in the abominable attempt into which he has let himself be drawn, to the extent of forgetting the duties to his country, which, under all circumstances, should be uppermost in the mind of every Frenchman.'¹⁷

On the very morning of the execution of the condemned men, on the entreaties of General Rapp, who evoked the spectacle of a whole family in tears,¹⁸ he granted mercy to Russillon, aide-de-camp and friend of Pichegru.¹⁹

¹⁷ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. ix., p. 392, No. 7,805, June 11, 1804.

¹⁸ Rapp, 'Mémoires,' p. 10.

¹⁹ 'Recueil des Interrogatoires subis par le General Moreau,' p. 5, Paris, year xii.

Finally, he offered pardon to Georges himself, and to his accomplices. Improbable as this may appear, there can be no doubt of this act of generosity if the date on which it was made public be taken into consideration, January 27, 1815, a period at which but little was said about the moral qualities of the prisoner of Elba.

‘One of the tyrant’s most zealous servants,’ says the *Journal des Débats*, ‘penetrated, by his orders, into the cell of the Royalists on the eve of their execution. He found them in prayer, and, seized with respect, addressed himself to Georges, and offered him and his companions, on the part of his master, brilliant employment in the army.’²⁰

²⁰ Azaïs, ‘Jugement Impartial sur Napoléon,’ p. 74.

V.

Women in Despair—Madame de Hatzfeld—Nobility of Heart
—Human Weaknesses—Barbé-Marbois—The Credit of
France—The Emperor's Moderation.

HE always gave way when a woman appealed to him. To a petition of Madame Primavesi, whose husband, a banker, was in prison, Napoleon answered :

‘Notwithstanding the wrong Primavesi has done, I will grant him his liberty. He must be ordered to be more circumspect and more prudent in future.’¹

When Prince Hatzfeld, at Berlin in 1806, regardless of his position as a member of Parliament, was discovered by means of one of his own letters to be acting as a spy, a court-martial was assembled ; capital sentence was certain to ensue, and its execution was to be anticipated the same day.

¹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. x., p. 60, No. 8,202, December 4, 1804.

A few hours before the sentence was pronounced Princess Hatzfeld succeeded in obtaining an audience of the Emperor,² who thus relates the scene to the Empress :

‘When I showed Madame de Hatzfeld her husband’s letter, she said with a sob, and very simply : “Ah, yes, that is certainly his writing.” As she read, her accents touched my heart, and caused me pain. I said : “Well, madame, throw that letter into the fire, and I shall no longer be powerful enough to punish your husband.” She burned the letter and became very happy. Her husband has since been quite tranquil. Two hours later he would have been lost. You see that I love good, gentle, simple women, but it is because they resemble you.’³

The foregoing narrative is completed by the account elsewhere given by Napoleon to the Princess of Prussia :

‘I was touched by Madame de Hatzfeld’s sorrow. I convinced her that her husband had behaved very wrongly, and that by the laws of war he had merited capital punishment. However, I even spared her the unpleasantness of a conviction, and gave into her hands the letter upon which the proof was based. It is true that

² General Rapp, ‘*Mémoires*,’ pp. 107-109.

³ ‘*Letters from Napoleon to Joséphine*,’ t. i., p. 196, Berlin, November 6, 1806.

the gentleness and profound misery of Madame de Hatzfeld induced me to act as I did.’⁴

We hope that the extreme courtesy of the following letter, written by Napoleon in answer to one of thanks from Madame de Hatzfeld, will satisfy the most exacting in respect of delicacy and good breeding :

‘I have read your letter with pleasure. I also like to remember the moment when I was able to put an end to your pain. In any circumstances that may arise in which I can be of use to you, you may apply to me, and you will find me glad to be of service to you.’⁵

In 1808 the Duc de Saint-Simon, a French *émigré*, was taken, arms in hand, condemned to death, and only owed his life to the tears of his daughter, who flung herself at the Emperor’s feet.⁶ Napoleon immediately wrote to Fouché :

‘Monsieur Saint-Simon has been condemned to death. Have him transferred to either the Castle of Lourdes or of Joux, as it is probable that his case will last for some time, and my intention is to commute his sentence for one of imprisonment.’⁷

⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xii., p. 431, No. 11,104, October 28, 1806.

⁵ *Ibid.*, t. xiii., p. 445, No. 11,125, October 31, 1806.

⁶ De Ségur, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 300 ; Duc de Rovigo, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iv., p. 18.

⁷ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xviii., p. 219, No. 14,708, January 15, 1809.

His clemency was not only aroused when weeping women and maidens threw themselves at his feet; it was extended also to acts which produced no great emotion.

The Protocol Commission committed blunder after blunder, till the Emperor at last wrote to Champagny :

‘ This is the hundredth folly of which they have been guilty. Monsieur —— is too old and too stupid to be mixed up in my affairs. Let him continue his pension from the Foreign Office, and take no further part in anything.’⁸

The French Minister at Baden married according to the dictates of his heart, and not those of diplomatic proprieties. Napoleon wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs :

‘ Advise this Minister to send in his resignation; I will find him other employment at home. That woman is too disreputable, and if he had her out to join him in secret, he would expose himself to insults.’⁹

A Napoleon composed of little human weaknesses like those of his subordinates! What a contrast to the overbearing man whom certain writers have endeavoured to portray!

Nothing annoyed the Emperor so much as to

⁸ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xvi., p. 419, No. 13,654, March 15, 1808.

⁹ *Ibid.*, t. xviii., p. 77, No. 14,505, November 25, 1808.

see his diplomatic agents maintaining correspondence with Lucien Bonaparte at the very time when he was acting as standard-bearer of the opposition to the Empire. Such was the case with Alquier and Lefèvre at Rome. He was satisfied with sending one of them to Westphalia and the other to Denmark as *chargés d'affaires*.¹⁰

When Jacqueminot quitted his post in the army without waiting for his successor, instead of punishing him, Napoleon wrote to the Minister for War :

‘Had I not remembered the services of his father the Senator, I would have struck his name off the army-list and disgraced him. Let the Senator know the danger his son has run, and the prejudice that his conduct has left in my mind.’¹¹

He is always glad to avoid, as far as possible, intervening in any matter when a fault has been committed. Here is an example : Some of the performers engaged at one of the theatres in receipt of a public grant betook themselves to Russia in spite of their contracts. Napoleon wrote to his Ambassador :

‘Several actors have left Paris and taken refuge in Russia ; I wish you to ignore their

¹⁰ Jung, ‘*Mémoires de Lucien*,’ t. iii., p. 76.

¹¹ ‘*Correspondence of Napoleon I.*,’ t. xxiii., p. 464, No. 18,758, June 4, 1812.

wrongful conduct. We are in no want of dancers and actresses in Paris.'¹²

Our readers have doubtless not forgotten Aubry, the Minister for War, who, in 1794, displayed such pronounced hostility to Napoleon, and who did not hesitate to take from him his rank of General of Artillery. The Sovereign's resentment showed itself in the following decree :

'Article I.—A pension of 2,000 francs (£80) is hereby accorded to the widow of the late General of Artillery, Aubry.'¹³

Of all the public departments, the Treasury was the one in which the Emperor required the most absolute regularity ; not only was his own integrity most scrupulous, but it was his pride to prevent any side-blow that might shake the reputation of French finance.

His amazement may be imagined, therefore, when, after Austerlitz, he learned that a financial crisis had occurred in Paris owing to a disastrous operation of Barbé-Marbois, Minister of Finance, who had ventured to take the following step :

'To save the company of Ouvrard and Vandenberg, army contractors, from imminent bankruptcy, Barbé-Marbois confided to them out of the mass of bonds from the Receivers-General,

¹² 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xvii., p. 316, No. 14,107, June 16, 1808.

¹³ *Ibid.*, t. xxviii., p. 275, No. 22,045, June 11, 1815.

lying at the Treasury, a sum of 85,000,000 francs (£3,400,000), which the company deposited at the Bank of France. Upon the strength of this deposit, the Bank increased the issue of its notes, and this operation tended to bring about the impossibility, in which it found itself, of meeting payments across the counter.¹⁴

Such a Minister would, by a scratch of the pen, have been handed over to justice in any country, but not so with Napoleon. Although by the words, 'Barbé-Marbois has advanced to some contractors a sum of 85,000,000 francs. Had I been defeated, the coalition could not have found a more powerful ally,' he showed that he clearly realized what might have been the terrible consequences of this Minister's conduct, he knows how to temper the effects of his righteous indignation, and his letter ends with these words :

'Barbé-Marbois has betrayed his trust. There is, however, no need to say so to him, or to frighten him before my return, which will be immediate.'¹⁵

Back again in Paris, he could do no less than remove the Minister who, to say the least of it, had been so imprudent, but notice in what mild terms he couched his decision :

¹⁴ Miot de Mérito, '*Mémoires*,' t. ii., p. 269.

¹⁵ '*Correspondence of Napoleon I.*,' t. xi., p. 496, No. 9,604 to Prince Joseph, December 25, 1805.

‘Monsieur de Champagny, having resolved to take the portfolio of the Treasury from Monsieur Barbé-Marbois, I desire you to go, in the course of the day, to him to announce my determination. You will be careful to make him understand that I am compelled to make this change on account of considerations relative to the welfare of my service.’¹⁶

On the same day, in announcing what he had done to Lebrun, who had the title of Arch-treasurer, Napoleon rather sought to excuse than to accuse the guilty Minister :

‘I have taken Marbois’ portfolio from him. He has done things which are inconceivable. I still believe him to be an honest man, but influenced by scoundrels.’¹⁷

Two years later the Emperor rehabilitated his former Minister, and gave him a proof of the confidence he had in his honesty by making him President of the *Cour des Comptes*. Later on he raised him to the Senate.¹⁸

Faithful to the rule of conduct laid down for themselves by most of those who had always benefited by Napoleon’s kindness, Barbé-Marbois, in 1814, regarded it as a duty to help on as zealously as he could the downfall of the Emperor.¹⁹

¹⁶ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xi., p. 558, No. 9,708, January 27, 1806.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, t. xi., p. 559, No. 9,709, January 27, 1806.

¹⁸ Meneval, ‘Souvenirs,’ t. iii., p. 143. ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 144.

VI.

The Realities of Life—Moral Respect for Acquired Positions
—Fouché—A Hardened Conspirator—Fouché's Ambassador—Disgrace—Inexhaustible Forbearance—Fouché's Triple Game.

WAS Napoleon under all circumstances, without exception, the man we have just portrayed in the foregoing chapters? We will not pretend that he was. Did he never commit an injustice? We will not suggest that, either.

The truth is as far removed from the systematic attacks which refuse to the Emperor every human feeling, as it is from the fanatical arguments which presume him possessed of superhuman virtues.

To those who deny him all generosity, we reply, proofs in hand: Napoleon was generous; and we will add: It was almost impossible for him to fail in generosity.

A Monarch, born on the steps of a throne, brought up by courtiers, accustomed to have every wish realized as soon as formulated, does

not, cannot, know the sufferings of the outcast. He, unconscious of the extent of the harm he can do, may, without reflection, destroy situations acquired with difficulty, and remain insensible to the entreaties of the unfortunate. But the Sovereign who reaches supreme dignity, after having started from a poor and desolate home, bearing only in his heart the recollections of the miseries of his parents, he, unless he be a brute and a monster, will be sensible of the griefs and sufferings of others.

That Napoleon committed injustices, that he allowed them to be committed, and even that some were committed at his instigation, for which, by his position of command, he became responsible, we yet once more willingly admit. But is it not the fate of all men invested with any command whatsoever?

We have no reluctance, then, in owning that Napoleon, for whom we claim the ordinary attributes of humanity, both good and bad, and who had to govern during the most difficult period which any country has ever passed through, may have occasionally been unduly severe. But we must also recognize that towards many persons his goodness was boundless.

We know that this was his unvarying attitude towards all the members of his family. There were others for whom he did more. The Emperor

had for certain of his early colleagues, whom he had raised to splendid positions, a kind of moral deference, inspired perhaps by public opinion, perhaps by exaggerated gratitude, perhaps by both influences combined, from which he never succeeded in freeing himself, though it was often prejudicial to his personal interests, and even to those of France.

Constant disobedience, repeated faults, conspiracies against his person, nothing could ever persuade him to suppress, with the severity they deserved, the criminal acts of high officials created by him. If they had to undergo a few months of disgrace, they were speedily recalled to other well-paid positions, when they ought to have passed the rest of their days in deservedly despised banishment.

This curious side of Napoleon's character is easy to study in his persistent kindness towards Fouché and Talleyrand, 'who never had any communications with one another,' says Prince Metternich,¹ 'except when they were hatching some plot against the established order of things, and chanced to meet.'

They were both of them direct instruments in the fall of the Empire, though, as we shall see, they did not wait for 1814.

We read in Fouché's Memoirs :²

¹ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 71.

² T. i., p. 385.

'I told Napoleon that if the *Corps Législatif* arrogated to itself the right of representing the Sovereign by itself, there would be nothing for it but to dissolve it, and that if Louis XVI. had acted thus, that unhappy Prince would be still alive and reigning.

'He looked at me in astonishment, and after a moment's silence said :

"What do you mean, Duke of Otranto? It seems to me that you were one of those who sent Louis XVI. to the scaffold."

"Yes, sire," I answered without hesitation ; "it was the first service I had the happiness of rendering to your Majesty."

Never, we think, has political cynicism been pushed further, nor were shameless duplicity, secret conspiracy, and continual treason better personified than by the man of whom the Duke of Vicenza said : 'Fouché was one of Napoleon's great mistakes.'³

From 1800 onwards, we shall find Fouché, Minister of Police, at the head of the party that was on the look-out for Napoleon's defeat at Marengo, 'to drag the Republic from between the claws of the Corsican who is imperilling it.'

On June 20 it was rumoured in Paris that Napoleon had been beaten. The conspirators

³ 'Souvenirs,' t. ii., p. 162.

crowded round Fouché, pressing him to act at once, but, like a prudent man, he said :

‘ Wait ; let there be no carelessness, no imprudence, no envenomed words, and nothing ostensible or hostile.’⁴

It was well for them that they listened to this wise advice, for next day the news arrived of the splendid victory of the First Consul.

Did Fouché’s hostility to Bonaparte arise, as the Duchesse d’Abrantès says, from his failure to obtain, after the 18th Brumaire, one of the posts as Consul ?⁵ It may be so, but was that necessary to put him into an attitude of rebellion ?—for conspiracy was one of the essentials of his temperament. Breath was not more vital to his existence than the need to upset every Government under which he served.

In 1802, for the first time, in order to get rid of him, the Ministry of Police was abolished, and he was appointed to the *Sénatorerie* of Aix, which was worth about 66,000 francs (£2,640) a year, in addition to a present of a sum of 1,200,000 francs (£48,000) ! Most Ministers would be content with such a disgrace !

Fouché maintained his own secret police (*contre-police*). In 1804, on the occasion of the trial of

⁴ Fouché, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 182 ; Baron Hyde de Neuville, ‘Mémoires et Souvenirs,’ p. 332.

⁵ Duchesse d’Abrantès, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 47.

Moreau, Georges and Pichegru, Bourrienne says :⁶

‘I have never had any doubt in my own mind as to the secret support given to the conspirators by Fouché’s police.’

And if we go for proof to the reports of Royalist agents, Fauche-Borel will tell us that ‘Fouché knows the designs of the King, and it is he, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, who has saved, and still saves, the King’s friends.’⁷

The equivocal proceedings of his Minister of Police, who had been recalled in 1804, did not pass unnoticed by Napoleon, who wrote to him in 1808 :

‘I cannot understand you at all. Is the weather too hot for you in Paris this summer? I have to send your riddles to the Arch-Chancellor for explanation. All that I can make out of them is very contemptible ; it is even worse than were the scenes of last autumn. Try to be Minister of Police ; suppress troubles, and do not foment them. Quiet public opinion, instead of scattering abroad fire-brands. In two words, do not give me, by yourself, more trouble than the entire police of the Empire.’⁸

⁶ ‘Mémoires,’ t. v., p. 285.

⁷ Fauche-Borel, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 254.

⁸ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xvii., p. 377, No. 14,190, to Fouché, July 13, 1808.

No doubt it was at this time that, according to Meneval, Napoleon said :

‘Give orders to have that fellow’s correspondence inspected!’⁹

If we may believe Fouché himself, his combinations could not fail to give him some uneasy moments ; he was paving the way for ‘the events of 1809—that is to say, the war with Austria and the attack by the English upon Antwerp, which were only the first moves in a plan that had for its object the dethronement of the Emperor.’¹⁰

He also tells us that, in view of this grand scheme, he became reconciled to Talleyrand in an interview at the house of Princess de Vaudémont at Suresnes.¹¹

‘Never were greater contrasts,’ says Count Mollien,¹² ‘brought together, and it was perhaps the very strangeness of such an agreement that rendered him more suspected by Napoleon.’

‘The reconciliation between these two Ministers gave rise,’ adds Mollien,¹³ ‘to this remark of the Emperor, who said to them one day at a meeting of the Council : “So you are hatching plots !”’

The victories of Napoleon were very disconcerting to these subversive combinations, in which the defeat of the French was a principal factor.

⁹ ‘Souvenirs,’ t. iii., p. 63.

¹⁰ Fouché, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 279.

¹² Mollien, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 11.

¹³ *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 11.

Nevertheless, Fouché was not to be discouraged, and in 1810, on the pretext of wishing to treat for peace, he, Fouché, without orders, without power, sent a negotiator to London. Who was this improvised diplomat? No less a person than Ouvrard,¹⁴ the contractor of ill-repute, the man who had dipped into every sort of jobbery.

The strangeness of the Ambassador may leave us to suppose that the apparent motives of his mission covered more extended powers, as he was going to a country where he would have to deal not only with enemies of France, but also with enemies of the Emperor, the Royalists.

This filled the brimming cup to overflowing, and without inquiring into the secrets of Ouvrard's mission to England, Napoleon dismissed Fouché in the following terms :

‘Monsieur le Duc d’Otrante, I have received your letter of June 2. I know all the services you have rendered me, and I believe in your attachment to and zeal for my service. It is, however, impossible for me, without failing in self-respect, to leave you in possession of your portfolio. The post of Minister of Police demands entire and absolute confidence. You have already, in

¹⁴ Walter Scott, ‘Life of Napoleon Bonaparte,’ vol. vii., p. 74; Girardin, ‘Journal et Souvenirs,’ t. ii., p. 388; Fouché, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 413; Duc de Rovigo, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iv., pp. 30, 89, *et seq.*

important circumstances, compromised my peace and that of the State . . . and the singular view that you take of the duties of a Minister of Police does not adapt itself to the welfare of the State. Although I do not distrust your attachment and fidelity, I am nevertheless obliged to keep a perpetual watch, which wearies me, and to which I cannot be bound. . . . I cannot hope that you will change your habits, as for several years past striking examples and repeated proofs of my displeasure have not altered you.¹⁵

This letter reads rather like a pleading than like the decision of an authoritative Sovereign dismissing a Minister. But in writing it Napoleon was following the natural bent of his character, which always inclined him to treat with consideration any person he was compelled to disgrace.

And, as we have already had occasion to notice under many circumstances, he softens his decision by appointing Fouché, on the very same day, to be Governor-General of Rome. He informs him in these terms of his appointment :

‘ We expect that you will continue, in this new post, to give us proofs of your zeal for our service and attachment to our person.’¹⁶

¹⁵ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xx., p. 392, No. 16,529, June 3, 1810.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, t. xx., p. 393, No. 16,530, June 3, 1810.

On reading this letter we are struck with the same astonishment as that which seized the English author 'at seeing Napoleon limit the effects of his resentment to disgracing his Minister, when he had every reason to be extremely indignant with Fouché for meddling, without permission, in an affair of such great importance.'¹⁷

While Fouché was making his preparations for departure, it happened, unluckily for him, that Ouvrard was arrested and his papers put under seal.¹⁸ The result of this was that Fouché found himself in serious trouble with the Emperor, and had to flee from Paris into Tuscany to avoid arrest.¹⁹

There he besought the intercession of Princess Eliza, and every wheel was set in motion to bring about a suspension of the pursuit. He had already sent his wife to the Emperor, who had not shown excessive severity towards the spouse of his untrustworthy Minister, if we are to believe the following letter written by Fouché himself:

'The Emperor listened to my wife with a kindness that touched her.'²⁰

¹⁷ Scott, 'Life of Napoleon Bonaparte,' vol. vii., p. 74.

¹⁸ Girardin, 'Journal et Souvenirs,' t. ii., p. 388.

¹⁹ Fouché, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., pp. 30 *et seq.*

²⁰ Autograph letter from Fouché to Princess Eliza; Lyons, August 24, 1810 (Charavay Collection).

Eliza Bonaparte obtained from her brother leave for Fouché to live in his *Sénatorerie* of Aix.²¹

After such an escape, it might be imagined that the former Minister would consider himself very lucky to be able to live quietly at Aix on the comfortable income of his post.

But that would show ignorance both of his character and of Napoleon's. He knew that the unexpected might always be looked for from him, and worked unceasingly upon Duroc and Narbonne, upon the pretext that his health would not stand the climate of the South. Finally, in 1811, the Emperor, moved to pity, authorized him to live in his country house at Ferrières.²²

Once installed at Ferrières, Fouché soon began to think of how to regain the ground he had lost with the Emperor.

He went skilfully to work. In a letter to Duroc of 1812, he insinuates that 'I have quitted the country and come to Paris to express to the Emperor all the feelings of which my heart is full. But I have been unable to see the Emperor, and am preparing to leave the capital, which does not suit me for long. I shall withdraw again to the country, and there wait with resignation until the Emperor will receive me. Until that time, I

²¹ Fouché, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 37.

²² *Ibid.*, t. ii., p. 100.

think that I shall abstain from attending the Senate. I beg you to tell me what you think best under the circumstances.'²³

Fouché had not been mistaken in the steps he had taken; he received an answer from Duroc containing these words:

'I have shown your letter to Napoleon. His Majesty approves of your attending the Senate, and of your appearing at Court whenever your Senatorial functions call you thither.'²⁴

That obstacle cleared, it was for Fouché mere child's-play to completely recover the favours of his indulgent master. In 1813 he was appointed Governor of Illyria in succession to General Junot. During his audience on taking leave, he said to the Emperor:

'Your Majesty knows that I am devoted to you till death, and the post to which you have condescended to summon me will furnish me with means of giving fresh proofs to your Majesty of what I say.'

'Thereupon the Governor-General of the Illyrian provinces retired with his hand upon his heart, bowing himself down to the ground, but in his sea-green eyes hideous things were written.'²⁵

²³ Autograph letter from Fouché, June 4, 1812 (Charavay Collection, 1860).

²⁴ Charavay Collection, 1860.

²⁵ Duke of Vicenza, 'Souvenirs,' t. ii., pp. 211, 212.

Supposing that we admit, with Monsieur de Bausset, that the secret object of the Emperor in raising Fouché to this high position was, 'not to leave such a man in Paris under existing circumstances'²⁶ (a presumption which is also confirmed by Caulaincourt²⁷), we must at any rate, conclude :

1st. That Napoleon was perfectly acquainted with Fouché's character.

2nd. That, of all the means at the disposal of absolute monarchs for ridding themselves of intriguers, he only employed the most benevolent.

Napoleon's clemency towards this wretched creature was once more fatal : Fouché gave the Emperor a deadly blow when he induced Murat to enter the coalition formed against France.

'Murat was still hesitating,' says Fouché,²⁸ 'when I communicated to him my latest news from Paris. Decided by what I told him, he confided to me his plan for a proclamation, or rather declaration, of war, in which I suggested several alterations which he adopted.'

Napoleon, who could not suspect such infamy and such ingratitude, knowing the bonds existing between his former Minister of Police and Murat, wrote openly to Fouché to approach the King of

²⁶ Bausset, '*Mémoires*,' t. ii., p. 214.

²⁷ Duke of Vicenza, '*Souvenirs*,' t. i., p. 213.

²⁸ '*Mémoires*,' t. ii., p. 264.

Naples so as to bring him to a better frame of mind.²⁹

Remembering only the last oaths of the Governor-General of Illyria, Napoleon wrote to King Joseph to make attempts to bring round Murat, adding :

‘As Senator Fouché is still in those parts, you can write to him to interest himself in the matter.’³⁰

There is no doubt that Fouché ‘interested himself in the matter,’ for on his way back to France we find him at Prince Eugène’s headquarters, asking the latter to follow Murat’s example and betray the Emperor.³¹ Happily for the honour of humanity, the Viceroy turned a deaf ear to his perfidious proposals.

While Napoleon was in the Island of Elba, Fouché, quite naturally, began to conspire against Louis XVIII.³²

In 1815, after the return from Elba, the Emperor, always credulous, always anxious not to part with people to whom he was accustomed, once more appointed Fouché Minister of Police. Instantly his Machiavelian manœuvres began

²⁹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxvii., p. 157, No. 21,239, February 13, 1814.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, t. xxvii., p. 250, No. 21,382, February 26, 1814.

³¹ Fouché, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 271.

³² *Ibid.*, t. ii., p. 304.

anew, which are thus summed up by Chateaubriand :³³

‘At the moment that Fouché was sending Monsieur Gaillard to Ghent, to negotiate with the brother of Louis XVI., his agents at Basle were in communication with those of Prince Metternich respecting Napoleon II., while Monsieur de Saint-Léon, despatched also by Fouché, went to Vienna to treat there for an offer of the crown to the Duke of Orleans.’

When these intrigues, confirmed by Prince Metternich,³⁴ were discovered, thanks to the arrival at Basle of an emissary from the Emperor, Fouché again had an answer ready for Napoleon, who was quite content to accept any tortuous explanations.³⁵ Then Fouché was once more at liberty to reopen negotiations at Ghent with Louis XVIII., and—how shall we say it?—with Wellington,³⁶ who in all probability was, before Waterloo, put in possession of ‘the secret of France,’ according to the eloquent expression of De Chaboulon.³⁷

We find Fouché again at the head of the Provisional Government, most determined in

³³ ‘Mémoires d’Outre-Tombe,’ t. iii., p. 347.

³⁴ ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 208.

³⁵ Fleury de Chaboulon, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., pp. 16, 17.

³⁶ Fouché, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 324.

³⁷ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 106.

clamouring for Napoleon's abdication, and decided to have him arrested if necessary.

Such was the reward that Napoleon received for his untiring kindness, but he found another as simple as himself, for Louis XVIII. made Fouché his Minister.

★

VII.

Talleyrand—His Portrait of himself—Corruption—A Gold Mine—A Russian Alliance—A European Minister—The Sovereign's Longanimity—Talleyrand's Debts—The Emperor's Delicacy.

THE career of Talleyrand is almost completely analogous to that of Fouché. 'Serve and deceive' is the motto that history will add to the quarterings of these two statesmen, ennobled by the Empire.

There will never be drawn a more perfect portrait of Talleyrand than the exquisite little miniature which he himself painted for us when he took an oath of fidelity to Louis XVIII., adding the words :

'Sire, it is the thirteenth !'

After having worked at the destruction of every successive form of Government attempted by the Revolution, he wrote to Bonaparte to return from Egypt,¹ and was one of those who principally

¹ Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte,' t. i., p. 273.

contributed to the success of the *coup d'état* of the 18th Brumaire.

Minister for Foreign Affairs under the Consulate and the Empire, Talleyrand, 'uniting in his person all that ancient or modern times can offer in the way of examples of corruption, having, in that respect, surpassed all the limits previously known,'² made no more difficulties about betraying Napoleon than about accepting from his hand benefits which would have overwhelmed the best servant.

Minister, Prince of Benevento, Arch-Chancellor of State, Vice and Grand Elector, Grand Chamberlain of the Empire (each office bringing with it salaries which amounted to millions of francs)—such are the titles that sheltered him who, according to Prince Metternich, 'was constantly endeavouring to conspire against the Emperor.'³

'From 1801,' says Fouché,⁴ 'we find Talleyrand trafficking in State secrets. A sum of £60,000 sterling (*sic*) was paid by England to the faithless custodians of the secret provisions of the treaty between France and Russia.'

After urging Napoleon, in 1804, to arrest the Duc d'Enghien,⁵ Talleyrand did not hesitate to bewail the death of that Prince, which he himself

² Marmont, 'Mémoires,' t. vii., p. 3.

³ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 70. ⁴ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 247.

⁵ Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien,' t. ii., p. 432.

had recommended,⁶ and, like a new Pilate, declared himself ignorant of what, in his impudent language, he calls 'worse than a crime, a mistake.'⁷

'During his whole tenure of office he regarded,' says Monsieur de Gagern, 'his high position as a gold mine. Civilities to foreign nations had to be paid for, not in snuff-boxes and diamonds, according to custom, but in ready money. Who can tell what sums thus flowed in to him from the Great Powers?'⁸

By what sorcery, or rather by what palpable arguments, was Talleyrand induced to undermine secretly the views of his Sovereign, whom, in 1808, he had accompanied to Erfurt with the object of concluding a solid treaty with the Emperor of Russia, an alliance which was to have been sealed by the marriage of the French Monarch with a sister of the Czar? He omits to tell us this in his memoirs, although he says that he dreaded for Europe the results of an alliance between France and Russia.

'In my opinion,' he adds, 'it was necessary to allow the idea of this alliance to go just far enough to satisfy Napoleon, and yet to put

⁶ Roederer, '*Mémoires*,' t. iii., p. 541.

⁷ Jung, '*Mémoires de Lucien*,' t. ii., p. 432.

⁸ Talleyrand, '*Souvenirs Intimes*,' p. 65. (Extract from the *Memoirs of Monsieur de Gagern*.)

sufficient obstacles in the way to make it difficult of execution. All the skill that I expected to need in dealing with the Emperor Alexander was unnecessary. He understood me at the first word, and understood me, moreover, exactly in the sense that I had hoped for.⁹

So that, in order to work his 'gold mine' satisfactorily, Talleyrand thought himself called upon to act as Minister for Europe against France, instead of as Minister of the Emperor against Europe.

For a confirmation of this undeniable treason, we may glance at the memoirs of Prince Metternich, who, in sending to his Government an account of the interview at Erfurt, thus expresses himself :

'On the day of Talleyrand's arrival he sought an audience of the Czar Alexander, and said to him these contemptible words :

"Sire, what are you about here? It is you who must save Europe, and you can only do it by holding your own against Napoleon."'¹⁰

Among the plots which were elaborated during the nocturnal meetings at the house of the Princess of Tour and Taxis,¹¹ we come upon the one of which Fouché has left us an account,¹² and

⁹ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 450.

¹⁰ Prince Metternich, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 248.

¹¹ Talleyrand, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 450.

¹² Fouché, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 279.

which brought about the war with Austria in 1809.

In 1814, on finding Talleyrand in possession, not of a cabin in the hulks, but of the first dignities of the Empire, we are tempted to suppose that Napoleon was ignorant of all the felonies and crimes of his Minister. But such was not the case. The Emperor was perfectly acquainted with Talleyrand's conduct, but contented himself with depriving him of some of his prerogatives, for to beat down the man whom he had raised up was repugnant to Napoleon. We find proofs everywhere of the slight amount of confidence he reposed in Talleyrand.

Miot de Mérito says :¹³

‘He was not unaware of Talleyrand’s conspiracies ; he knew how to repress them gradually, and even to punish them.’

Prince Metternich¹⁴ relates that on one occasion the Emperor said to him :

‘When I wish a thing done, I do not employ the Prince of Benevento ; I go to him when I do not wish a thing done, and then I appear as though I wished it.’

And farther on the same author adds :¹⁵

‘On January 28, 1809, the Emperor broke out

¹³ ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 301.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, t. i., p. 70.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, t. ii., p. 268.

into violent language against a party that he believed to exist, at the head of which he named Talleyrand and Fouché, and which had for its object to impede the advance of the Government.'

Count Mollien confirms, almost textually,¹⁶ the account of this scene, the origin of which is clearly explained in the following words by the Emperor's private secretary :

'The frequent visits paid at night by the Prince of Benevento to Madame Tour and Taxis, of which Napoleon at last received information, together with other symptoms, had planted in his mind strong suspicions as to the fidelity of his Minister.'¹⁷

In a conversation with Roederer, on March 3, 1809, the Emperor thus judged Talleyrand :

'I have covered him with honours, riches, and diamonds. He has employed them all against me. He has betrayed me as completely as he could, and at every opportunity.'¹⁸

Neither was Talleyrand's insatiable venality unknown to the Emperor.

When Champagny showed that, in treating for peace in 1809, he had obtained an indemnity of 85,000,000 francs (£3,400,000), whereas

¹⁶ 'Mémoires,' t. iii, p. 11.

¹⁷ Meneval, 'Souvenirs,' t. iii., p. 205.

¹⁸ Roederer, 'Mémoires,' t. iii., p. 541.

he was authorized to demand only 75,000,000 (£3,000,000), Napoleon said to him :

‘Your conduct is admirable. Had Talleyrand been in your place he would, no doubt, have given me my 75,000,000, but he would have put the other ten in his pocket.’¹⁹

Still more conclusive evidence is furnished to us by a letter from the Emperor himself in 1810 :

‘Monsieur le Prince de Bénévent, I have received your letter. It has caused me pain. While you were at the head of the Foreign Office, I purposely closed my eyes to many things. I am, therefore, vexed that you should have taken a step which recalls to me memories I desired, and still desire, to forget.’²⁰

We think that we have proved indisputably that Napoleon was aware of the hostility, cupidity and disloyalty of Talleyrand.

It only remains for us to add that the Emperor showed extreme kindness to Talleyrand in private matters of the greatest delicacy outside his official favours, and that he helped him with money whenever Talleyrand was in difficulties. For instance : Talleyrand, to facilitate the marriage of Count Auguste de Talleyrand, lent him

¹⁹ De Champagny, ‘Souvenirs,’ p. 117.

²⁰ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxi., p. 79, No. 16,850, August 29, 1810.

200,000 francs (£8,000) upon securities which the latter was unable to meet when they fell due. The Emperor, being informed of this, wrote :

‘ Matrimonial engagements are sacred, and as it was stated that the Prince of Benevento had given 200,000 francs, he ought not to have required security. As, however, he did require security, delicacy ought to have prevented him from making use of it. As I made the sacrifice of 2,200,000 francs (£88,000), and bought the Prince of Benevento’s hotel at that price, merely for the sake of helping him to arrange his affairs, I desire that a portion of that sum should be utilized in settling those also of Count Auguste de Talleyrand.’²¹

These acts of generosity were performed for the man of whom Napoleon wrote to his brother Joseph in these terms :

‘ Beware of Talleyrand. I have tried him now for sixteen years, and have shown him great kindness ; but, without doubt, he is the greatest enemy our house has, especially now that fortune seems to be abandoning it.’²²

This judgment is severe, but not more so than is justified by the following letter from Talleyrand of March 30, 1814, written at the very moment

²¹ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxiii., p. 109, No. 18,370, December 26, 1811.

²² *Ibid.*, t. xxvii., p. 131, No. 28,210, February 8, 1814.

when, according to De Ségur, Talleyrand, 'the chief of the conspirators, was arrested as he was leaving the barriers of Paris.'²³

'Here, dear friend, is some good news. Marshal Marmont has just capitulated with his whole corps. This is an effect of our proclamations and papers. He will no longer serve *Buonaparte* against his country.'²⁴

Thus seeing revealed, as it has been, the forbearance of Napoleon towards persons of such base untrustworthiness, one begins to ask whether with him indulgence did not amount to folly.

Evidently Napoleon did not know, in their details, the precise facts as they are shown by the juxtaposition of documents; but the foregoing pages prove that he had more than mere suspicions as to the criminal acts of his two Ministers. His unfailing kindness shows that he was not the man without heart, and without conscience, who enjoyed nothing so much as mortifying, punishing and ruining his officials, that has been depicted.

²³ De Ségur, 'Mémoires,' t. vii., p. 134.

²⁴ Unpublished letter to the Duchess of Courland. Charavay, 'L'Amateur d'Autographes,' first year, No. 3, p. 45.

d'Enghien?

VIII.

Charges against Napoleon—The Duc d'Enghien—Political Crimes—Responsibility—Public Opinion—The Answers of the Accused—Members of the Council of War—A Just Appreciation.

WE might here close this portion of our work upon the generosity of Napoleon, if we did not wish to avoid the legitimate reproach of omitting all mention of the principal charges upon which his accusers rely for proof that he possessed instincts of cruelty and persecution.

These charges are three in number : the execution of the Duc d'Enghien at Vincennes, the banishment of Moreau, and the exile of Madame de Staël.

The Duc d'Enghien was seized by force at Ettenheim (in the grand-duchy of Baden) on March 15, 1804, taken to Vincennes on the 20th, tried by a court-martial composed of a general, five colonels, and a major of *gendarmérie*, unanimously condemned to death, and shot in the trenches of the castle.

Nobody, we believe, would deliberately approve of the seizure of an enemy in foreign territory. Conscience revolts even more strongly when the prisoner has incurred the penalty of death.

An action of this kind comes into the category of crimes classed as political, for which the history of all governments finds special extenuating circumstances, summed up under the name of reasons of State. Precedents of this nature are not wanting.

Not to mention the princely murders of the reign of Charles VI., nor of Charles IX., nor the assassination of the Duc de Guise, we may count among them the tragic end of the Czar Paul I., and must add that republics have not been exempt from similar acts.

The immolation of the innumerable victims of the Revolution, and, in our own days, the massacre of the hostages of the Commune, are so many iniquities for which the only palliation is that they were committed through political necessity.

The arrest and execution of the Duc d'Enghien constitute, therefore, what is called a political crime. It can never be wiped out, any more than other crimes; but the question for us is whether he who was guilty of it acted under the pressure of urgent and imperious circumstances.

It would be superfluous to reopen, for the

hundredth time, the discussion as to the responsibility incurred by each of the actors in the drama, as Napoleon has taken it all upon himself, and even in his will has declared that, under similar circumstances, he would act again in the same manner.

In order to judge Napoleon's conduct on this occasion, we must consider the state of men's minds in 1804.

The country was, in the first place, jealous of the tranquillity that the First Consul seemed about to secure for it. To the uninterrupted wars of the previous twelve years, wars which had drawn to the frontier all the available portion of the population, had succeeded a peace which men hoped to enjoy for a long time. The horrors of terrorism and internal insurrections, the infamies of the scaffold, the iniquities of the anonymous despotism of sectaries, madmen and intriguers, the innumerable miseries of a nation on the verge of bankruptcy, had been followed by an era of unhopèd-for peace, in which people could live without fear, certain of respect for their persons and property—a new birth, in short, of public prosperity throughout the whole kingdom. Such were the blessings that Napoleon seemed to guarantee to the French nation, and it was convinced that he alone was the precious gauge of this new and happy existence; and the French,

too, were prepared to do anything to maintain Napoleon in power.

He alone—we must insist upon this point—by the prestige of his victories, and by the political sagacity he had displayed in the social reconstruction of his country, could master the different parties, in the State still breathless from the long struggles of the Revolution. Every plot, whether Jacobin or Royalist, inspired France with the same apprehensions.

Rightly or wrongly, public opinion in France confounded together the existence of Bonaparte and that of the country. It cannot be charged as a crime against the First Consul that he shared this opinion, so flattering to himself.

The attempt of the Rue Saint Nicaise, which had brought Napoleon within a hair's-breadth of death, had spread indescribable terror everywhere, and proof had been discovered that this conspiracy had its roots in the ranks of the Royalist refugees abroad.

After the discovery of the plot of Pichegru, Moreau and Georges, the First Consul learned, through reports from the police, that the Duc d'Enghien was one of the principal conspirators. Napoleon immediately resolved to seize the Prince and to make of him an example which should put an end to the attempts against himself. Once having committed the mistake of sending an

armed force into the territory of the grand-duchy of Baden, to seize the Duc d'Enghien, the death of the latter seems unavoidable.

When a man appears before a court-martial, declares that he has borne arms against his country, that he is ready to bear them again, and that he is in the pay of the enemies of France, his sentence cannot be doubtful; his execution is only a question of hours.

The Prince was condemned by virtue of the second clause of the law of October 6, 1791, which runs thus :

'Every conspiracy and plot tending to disturb the State by civil war, and to arm citizens one against another, or against the exercise of legitimate authority, shall be punished with death.'

Here is a passage taken word for word from the examination of the Duc d'Enghien :

'Asked, whether he had taken up arms against France.

'Answered, that he had been all through the war, and that he persisted in the declaration he had made to the captain and reporter, and which he had signed. Further, added that he was ready to go through another war, and that he wished to take service in the new war to be declared by England against France.'

¹ 'Trial of the Duc d'Enghien'; Bourrienne, 'Mémoires,' t. v., p. 376; Duc de Rovigo, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 436 *et seq.*

A prisoner who makes such answers no doubt displays noble pride, but he is inevitably condemned. The unhappy Duke perfectly realized the gravity of his position. To the exhortations of the president, who besought him not to persist in his declarations, and warned him that there was no appeal from the sentence of a military commission, he answered :

‘ I know it, and do not conceal from myself the danger that I run.’²

In seeking for the probable part played by the Duc d’Enghien in the secret councils wherein the seizure, that is to say the death, of the First Consul was decided upon, we must not forget that to the following question, ‘ What was to be your part in the attack ?’ put to Georges Cadoudal, at his examination on March 9, 1804, he answered :

‘ That part which one of the *ci-devant* French princes, who was to be in Paris at the time, should have assigned to me.’³

After the condemnation there remained to the First Consul the right, perhaps even the duty, of showing mercy. He would not use it. He considered that he ought to prove to his enemies that he would hesitate at nothing to ensure the

² Hulin, ‘ Explications Offertes aux Hommes Impartiaux,’ p. 8.

³ ‘ Recueil des Interrogatoires du Général Moreau et de ses Coaccusés,’ p. 129 ; Paris, Imperial Press, Prairial, year xii.

safety of the State. That is the only reproach that can be addressed to him ; we repeat that he very loyally took upon himself all the responsibility.

What was the impression caused in France by the execution of the Duc d'Enghien ? We will take the evidence of the man who, having first urged it forcibly, later on blamed it most loudly, Monsieur de Talleyrand.

'Not a voice,' he says, 'was raised in the country to protest against the outrageous injustice to which the Duc d'Enghien fell a victim. It is sad to have to say it, but such is the case, and it can only be explained by the dread that everyone felt of shaking the Government which had rescued France from anarchy.'⁴

It is not useless to mention that, among the judges who unanimously condemned the Duc d'Enghien to death, not one received any special mark of Consular or Imperial favour ; nor did one of them ever raise his voice to suggest that any pressure had been put upon his conscience. Their names were : General Hulin, Colonels Suitton, Bazancourt, Ravier, Barois, Rabbe, and Major Dautancourt.

'Respecting the composition of the Com-

⁴ Unpublished chapter of Talleyrand's 'Memoirs,' communicated by the Duc de Broglie to the Société d'Histoire Diplomatique (*Le Temps*, June 9, 1891).

mission,' says the president, General Hulin, in a pamphlet published in 1823, after the Restoration,⁵ 'I must remark that it was in no way unusual. It was formed of the colonels commanding the different corps garrisoned in Paris. This was a common proceeding, and we all owe the choice that fell upon us to the chance of our being quartered in that town.'

Such is the story of the trial and execution of the Duc d'Enghien. In these days, if it be possible to take a perfectly dispassionate view of it, it may be summed up thus: The Duc d'Enghien, arrested in consequence of recent plots against the life of Napoleon, in which he was implicated by police reports as the accomplice of Georges, Pichegru and others, was tried upon his own confession as a conspirator, and sentenced to death.⁶

If in our own day, far removed from the prepossessions of 1804, the violent proceedings of Napoleon seemed to us odious and inexcusable, with what epithet, from our modern standpoint,

⁵ 'Explications Offertes aux Hommes Impartiaux,' p. 5.

⁶ 'No evidence was adduced, no witnesses were examined; he was at once found guilty, and shot in the ditch of the fortress in the gray of the following morning; and his remains, dressed as they were, were thrown into a grave, which had been dug *before his trial*, on the spot where he fell.'—Alison's 'History of Europe,' epitomised edition, p. 219. The italics are Alison's.—*Translator*.

shall we stigmatize the conduct of the Duc d'Enghien, that Frenchman who claimed (to use his own expression) 'the honour of being the first to draw his sword' against his country when England should declare war on France?'⁷

⁷ Welschinger, 'Le Duc d'Enghien,' p. 228.

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IX.

Moreau — A Presumption — Guilt — Evidence — No Excuse available—Kindness of Napoleon—Moreau's Part in the 18th Brumaire—Treason.

MOREAU was included with Georges and Fichегru in a celebrated trial, and after ten years' seclusion saw his punishment commuted to that of banishment.

Several historians, who had no doubt come to the end of their arguments, have undertaken the ungrateful task of sapping Napoleon's reputation by exalting that of Moreau. With this object they have described to us how the First Consul took umbrage at the glorious successes of his brother-in-arms, and, in order to destroy him, implicated him in this iniquitous action.

Those who have read only a portion of the proceedings might perhaps have hesitated before pronouncing in favour of Moreau. But even though the guilt of the General appeared to them doubtful in 1804, they knew afterwards of what he was capable, who was killed by a French

bullet while fighting in the ranks of the Russian army, whose cannon he was pointing at his former friends and companions-in-arms.

The manner in which Moreau's presence with the Russian army first became known in the French camp is worth relating :

'A greyhound,' says Monsieur Peyrusse, 'wearing a collar on which were engraved the words, "I belong to General Moreau," had remained behind at Molnitz, and had been brought to the King of Saxony, who at once passed on the collar to the Prince of Neufchâtel.'¹

It is not, however, difficult to prove that General Moreau had conspired against the Government, if not against the life of the First Consul.

First of all, Moreau's attitude during the trial does not point to an absolutely clear conscience, nor to a man whose actions would all bear the light of day, for after beginning by declaring that he had had no communications with Pichegru since the Consulate, he ended by admitting that he had recently had several meetings by appointment with his fellow-prisoner.²

We will, however, call witnesses who, from the fact that they did not appear at the trial, will only

¹ Baron Peyrusse, 'Mémorial de 1809 à 1815,' p. 175, Carcassone, 1869; Baron Fain, 'Manuscrit de 1813,' t. ii., p. 291.

² 'Interrogatoire du Général Moreau,' p. 38 *et seq.*, Imperial Press, Prairial, year xii.

be the more conclusive, as it was supposed that all the witnesses of 1804 were in the pay of Napoleon.

The first witness shall be Baron Hyde de Neuville, associated with every Royalist plot. He says :

‘ The rivalry that existed between Moreau and Bonaparte, their distrust and detestation of each other, had induced Moreau to lend a willing ear to the projects that were being formed against the Consul.’³

On the other hand, Ambert, General of Division, who had served with Moreau and Pichegru, and knew them both intimately, left some notes in which we read :

‘ One evening, at the moment of the conference between Moreau and Pichegru, I was passing near the Madeleine on my way home from the Faubourg Saint Honoré. I was stopped on the boulevard, near to the shop of Leduc, former carriage-builder to the Queen, by Moreau’s aide-de-camp, Legay. I walked up and down with him several times between the Rue Royale and the Rue Duphot. Legay strongly urged me to go and see his General, who was unaware that I was in Paris, and laid stress upon the fact that Moreau had completely broken with Pichegru. I have learned since, from Legay, that they were at that

³ Baron Hyde de Neuville, ‘ *Mémoires et Souvenirs*,’ p. 394.

moment conferring together at a very short distance from where he and I were talking, and that he, Legay, was keeping watch for them.'

The same author goes on to mention, as having a direct connection with this interview, a plot with the object of carrying off the First Consul on the way to Saint-Cloud. In order not to excite suspicion, 'the conspirators were to be dressed in the uniform of the *chasseurs à cheval*.' General Ambert, who obtained intelligence of this scheme from one of the plotters, hastened to communicate it to Murat, Governor of Paris.⁴

General Marbot says :⁵

'An interview was arranged between Pichegru and Moreau, which took place at night near the Church of the Madeleine, then in course of construction. Moreau was a consenting party to the overthrow, and even to the death, of the First Consul.'

The fourth and most overwhelming piece of evidence emanates from Fauche-Borel, the indefatigable agent of the Royalist committees of London in communication with the enemies of the Consulate.

'In June, 1802, on reaching Paris, my first care was to send a note to General Moreau, who gave me an appointment in the house that he was then

⁴ General Ambert, 'Portraits Militaires,' pp. 333, 334.

⁵ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 198.

inhabiting, Petite Rue Saint-Pierre, belonging to his mother-in-law, Madame Hulot.⁶

The police, who were on the alert, arrested Fauche-Borel.

‘I succeeded, from the depths of the Temple prison, in opening communications with Moreau. The position in which I was placed decided him to employ another intermediary between himself and Pichegru, and he took into his confidence the Abbé David, a friend of both parties.’⁷

Further on we find this :

‘Moreau therefore consented to see Pichegru, although he disapproved his presence in Paris. The first conference took place on the Boulevard de la Madeleine at nine in the evening. Georges was present.’⁸

Finally, we will limit our quotations to these few lines, which we recommend to the meditations of any who still defend Moreau :

‘It was not long before I heard that Moreau was in the Temple ; I cannot express what were my feelings of grief, and my apprehension lest they should have discovered among his papers the original letters-patent of the King, which I had handed to him in June, 1802.’⁹

⁶ Fauche-Borel, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁹ *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 101.

We have thus incontestable proof that Moreau was conspiring with the Royalists, and consequently his arrest was an effect of the natural course of justice, and not of the vengeance of the First Consul.

Had Moreau even the excuse of having been ill-treated by his former colleague, after his elevation to the headship of the State? Certainly not. After wishing to marry him to his own sister Caroline,¹⁰ Bonaparte always treated Moreau with the utmost consideration. To give only one example, it was on the entreaties of this General that the First Consul decided to remove his own brother Lucien from the Ministry of the Interior.¹¹

It certainly was not Bonaparte who placed any obstacles in the way of Moreau's military advancement, and here is a proof of it.

When Moreau hesitated to accept the command of the Army of the Rhine, the First Consul wrote to him as follows :

' I had already informed you, my dear General, that the esteem and confidence of the Consuls would summon you to take the chief command of the forces destined to act in Germany. The modesty with which you refuse to accept this

¹⁰ Duchesse d'Abrantès, '*Mémoires*,' t. ii., p. 237.

¹¹ Miot de Mérito, '*Mémoires*,' t. i., p. 319; S. Girardin, '*Journal et Souvenirs*,' t. i., p. 197.

important command is, in their eyes, only an additional motive for giving it to you.¹²

Far from exciting Napoleon's jealousy, Moreau's successes caused him real pleasure.

'It was on December 6, 1800,' says Bourrienne,¹³ 'that the First Consul received the news of the victory of Hohenlinden. It was a Saturday : he had just come in from the theatre when I gave him the despatch. His joy was such that he jumped into the air, and fell back upon me, which saved him from falling on the ground.'

Nor did Napoleon ever seek to tarnish the splendour of a military renown which might eclipse his own. On the contrary, he always tried to render more important Moreau's merits and to make them better known. He caused the following words to be published in the *Moniteur*, on the day when he sent to the Minister of the Interior a brace of pistols studded with diamonds, for presentation to General Moreau :

'Citizen Minister, cause some of the battles gained by General Moreau to be engraved hereon. Do not mention them all, as you would have to remove too many diamonds, and although General Moreau does not attach great value to

¹² 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. vi., p. 455, No. 5,072, August 24, 1800.

¹³ 'Mémoires,' t. v., p. 249.

these, we must not too far tamper with the artist's design.¹⁴

Is it true, as has been said, that Moreau had vowed hatred against Bonaparte for having dragged him, without allowing him time to reflect, into the *coup d'état* of the 18th Brumaire? This assertion is perfectly untrue, and has been denied by Lucien, who points out Moreau's eagerness to second the preparations for the *coup d'état*,¹⁵ by Gohier, who records that Moreau did not disdain to become the gaoler of the Directors on the very day of the 18th Brumaire, and who adds :

'We must mention that General Moreau performed admirably the strange functions with which he was charged.'¹⁶

Finally, it has been denied by Moreau himself, who, writing from his prison to the First Consul, says :

'Surely you have not forgotten the disinterestedness with which I supported you on the 18th Brumaire.'¹⁷

But Moreau did more than simply take a part. He brought about the 18th Brumaire ; he was one of those with whom the matter had been

¹⁴ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. vi., p. 477, No. 5, 132, October 21, 1800.

¹⁵ Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte,' t. i., p. 286.

¹⁶ Gohier, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 261.

¹⁷ 'Interrogatoire du Général Moreau,' p. 19, Imperial Press, year xii.

discussed for a long time previously, and who gave assurances that Bonaparte was the only man capable of bringing the *coup d'état* to a successful issue.

‘Moreau,’ said Monsieur Bonnet in his speech for the defence, before the Criminal Court, ‘was in conference with one of the Directors, when the happy news arrived of the landing of Bonaparte at Fréjus. On hearing it, General Moreau’s first word, which he has repeated to you himself since the opening of this case, was, “That is the man we want to save France.”’¹⁸

In conspiring against the Consular Government the conqueror of Hohenlinden was moved merely by his own envy, which could not let him bear to see the steady rise of the man who had been his equal. Disappointed ambition, shattered hopes, were the only and the dishonourable feelings that led him to his final mistake.

We say again that the conduct of Moreau towards Napoleon in 1804 was without excuse. If there be any for his treason against his country in 1813, we must leave to others the task of discovering it.¹⁹

¹⁸ ‘Recueil des Discours prononcés par le Différents Défenseurs devant la Cour de Justice Criminelle dans le Procès Georges, Pichegru, et autres,’ t. i., p. 467, Paris, 1804.

¹⁹ It should, however, be borne in mind that the French guillotined Moreau’s father.—*Translator*.

X.

Madame de Staël—Severity of the Directory—Immeasurable Ambition—Recollection of Madame de Maintenon—A Rebuke—Napoleon's Aversion—The Struggle against the Empire.

To persecute an inoffensive woman, who was merely devoted to literature, and guilty only of the crime of expressing opinions distasteful to the Government, would be an arbitrary act, which would detract very much from the reputation of the Sovereign who did it, and would justify the indignation of Napoleon's adversaries.

Were things really as they have been represented? In the first place, the idea that Madame de Staël's presence in Paris was dangerous did not originate with Napoleon; he simply continued what had been done by preceding Governments. Under the Convention, the Committee of Public Safety 'desired Monsieur de Staël, Swedish Ambassador, to remove his wife from Paris. The measure was dropped in consequence of the resistance of the diplomat.'¹

¹ Albert Sorel, 'Madame de Staël,' p. 62.

Again, in 1795, the Directory caused her to be watched at Coppet, and orders were given for her arrest should she attempt to enter France ; being warned, she did not expose herself.²

Had she incurred this disgrace by her noble ardour in the defence of a traditional cause, such as Royalty, for example ? It is barely likely, after the judgment passed upon her by Mallet du Pan, the Royalist agent.

‘Madame de Staël,’ he says, ‘displays everywhere her shamelessness and her immorality.’³

Her aspirations, both before and during the Empire, are summed up in a short phrase of Albert Sorel : ‘She aimed at governing the State from her drawing-room.’⁴

Such an ambition naturally led her towards Bonaparte after his first successes in Italy. She foresaw the part the young General was to play in the future, and sought to obtain influence over him by pretending passion.

‘Madame de Staël,’ says Bailleul,⁵ ‘had addressed to him, while he was in Italy, letters full of enthusiasm, wherein she told him, almost in so many words, that Beauharnais’s widow was far from possessing the qualities necessary to

² Albert Sorel, ‘Madame de Staël,’ p. 73.

³ Mallet du Pan, ‘Correspondance,’ t. i., p. 233.

⁴ Sorel, ‘Madame de Staël,’ p. 76.

⁵ ‘Études sur Napoléon,’ t. ii., p. 55.

mate with so sublime a genius as that of Napoleon.'

Bourrienne relates the following circumstance :⁶

'I remember that in one of her letters Madame de Staël said to him, amongst other things, that they had been created for one another; that it was owing to an error in human institutions that the gentle and quiet Joséphine should have been joined with him; that nature seemed to have destined a soul of fire, like hers, to adore such a man as he was. All these absurdities disgusted Napoleon more than I can say.'

In spite of the silence of the young conqueror, she continued to be haunted by the recollection of Madame de Maintenon, and, like a clever woman, persisted in singing in every key the praises of Bonaparte, hoping that the echoes of her voice might reach the ears of the hero of Arcola. This fact hardly coincides with the repulsive portrait of Napoleon drawn by Monsieur Taine from the works of Madame de Staël.

With admirable determination and complete confidence in her own attractions, Madame de Staël, having learned that the day after his return to Paris Bonaparte was to go to Monsieur de Talleyrand's, immediately began to intrigue for an introduction to the conqueror of Italy.

'At ten o'clock in the morning,' says Talley-

⁶ 'Mémoires,' t. vi., p. 217.

rand,⁷ 'she was in my drawing-room. The General was announced; I went to meet him, and as we crossed the drawing-room I named Madame de Staël to him. He paid little attention.'

This first check was insufficient to suppress a woman, perhaps in love, certainly ambitious. No doubt she laid to the door of Napoleon's preoccupations, on his return, his indifference and inattention. Thenceforward she watched the opportunity which was to bring the General to her feet, for she never doubted the power of her charms. The next meeting, so earnestly longed for, took place at the party given by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Arnault gives the following details :

"It is impossible to get near your General," she said ; "you must present me to him."

'She overwhelmed Bonaparte with compliments; he let the conversation drop ; she, disappointed, tried every conceivable subject.

"General, what woman do you love best?"

"My own wife."

"Quite right ; but which do you respect most?"

"The one who best looks after her own household."

"I quite agree with you. What woman would hold the first place with you?"

⁷ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 259.

“ ‘ ‘ She who bears most children, madame.’ ”⁸

Thereupon Bonaparte turned his back upon her, leaving her speechless at the glacial answers she had received to the advances that she had considered as a preface to the romance created by her fertile imagination.

Undismayed by this new rebuff, she sought every means of letting Napoleon know her feelings for him. She went to Lucien, and took him into her confidence.

‘ From my anxiety to please your brother, I become quite stupid in his presence,’ she said, almost weeping. ‘ I can think of nothing when I want to talk to him ; I search about in my mind, I mix up my sentences. I want to force him to think of me, but I become as stupid as a goose.’⁹

a wrong common trouble with me

To these lamentations, repeated to Napoleon by Lucien, the former merely answered, with a shrug of his shoulders :

‘ I know her well. She declared to someone, who repeated it to me, that, since I would not love her, nor allow her to love me, she must hate me, because she could not remain indifferent to me. What a virago !’¹⁰

⁸ Arnault, ‘Souvenirs d’un Sexagénaire,’ t. iv., p. 27 ; Duc de Rovigo, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 28.

⁹ Jung, ‘Mémoires de Lucien,’ t. ii., p. 235.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

In the eyes of Bonaparte, the principal defect in Madame de Staël was her detestable reputation ; he had an instinctive repulsion for women who disregarded public opinion. We may judge how little he liked her from this letter to Joseph :

‘ Monsieur de Staël is in the utmost want, while his wife is giving dinners and balls. If you continue to see her, could you not prevail upon this woman to give her husband an allowance of 1,000 or 1,200 francs (£40—50) a month ? Have we already reached a time when, without honest people regarding it as shocking, not only manners, but even the most sacred duties that bind children to their parents, can be trampled underfoot ? Let us judge Madame de Staël as though she were a man — but a man, be it understood, who has inherited Monsieur Necker’s fortune—who had long enjoyed the privileges attaching to a distinguished name, but who left his wife in misery while he lived in abundance ; should we consider him fit to associate with ?’¹¹

Bonaparte’s aversion had the effect of turning Madame de Staël’s dream into a veritable nightmare. Love in her gave place to violent hatred which made her long for Napoleon’s ruin, though the country should perish with him.

She herself has said :

¹¹ Letter from Napoleon to Joseph, March 19, 1800 ; ‘ Mémoires du Roi Joseph,’ t. i., p. 190.

‘During the Marengo expedition, I wished that Napoleon might be beaten.’¹²

And it is of this woman that an opinion has been sought upon the Emperor! Her portrait of him is the one we are to accept as true!

No doubt nothing would have happened to her had she been content to nourish these impious hopes against her country in her own bosom. But, contrary to the desires of his enemy, Napoleon returned in triumph, having increased his glory tenfold in a short and brilliant campaign. Madame de Staël, beside herself, in despair, embarked upon the struggle with the First Consul. She put herself at the head of the malcontents, and plots were hatched in her house. Her own evidence on this point may suffice for us.¹³

Bonaparte became angry. Notwithstanding his legitimate complaints against Madame de Staël, he treated her with no sort of severity. He ordered her to ‘retire forty leagues from the capital, to Dijon if that were agreeable to her,’ letting her know at the same time that it only depended upon her own conduct to have the measure promptly revoked.¹⁴

She, however, continued to come back to Paris,

¹² ‘Dix Années d’Exil,’ p. 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁴ Madame Récamier, ‘Les Amis de sa Jeunesse,’ p. 17, Paris, 1874.

where, in the centre of all intrigues, she sought to communicate to others the frenzy of her own hatred.

‘That woman,’ wrote Napoleon, ‘continues her trade as an intriguer. She has been to Paris in spite of my orders. She is a real pest. My wish is that you should speak to the Minister, for I see that I shall be obliged to have her removed by the police.’¹⁵

Here are two other letters from the Emperor to Fouché :

‘I notice with pleasure that I hear nothing about Madame de Staël just now. When I think about her at all, it is simply because I have facts before my eyes. That woman is like a crow ; she thought the storm had already burst, and battened upon intrigues and follies. Let her go to Lake Lemman. Have not the Genevese done us harm enough ?’¹⁶

‘I hope you will no longer be foolish enough to bring forward Madame de Staël any more. As I hear that she is not to leave the Department of the Léman any more, the matter may be regarded as closed. I leave her absolutely free to go abroad, and to publish there as many libels as she pleases.’¹⁷

¹⁵ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.’ t. xiv., p. 537, No. 12,176, to Cambacérès, March 26, 1807.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 84, No. 12,397, April 18, 1807.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 181, No. 12,517, May 3, 1807.

A few days later the Emperor writes on the same subject :

‘Madame de Staël was, on the 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th, and probably still is, in Paris. I do not believe she can be there without your permission. It is absurd that I should have to repeat so simple an order. If her head had not been filled with all kinds of illusions, all this bother would never have arisen. The woman’s troubles are simply being increased, and she herself exposed to disagreeable scenes.’¹⁸

And again :

‘That mad Madame de Staël has written me a letter of six pages, and in her jumble I have found much impertinence and but little sense. I repeat that you are unjustly torturing her by letting her hope that she may ever live in Paris. If I gave you details of all she has done during the two months she has been at Montmorency, her country house, you would be surprised.’¹⁹

In our opinion we may give up, once for all, the legend of the persecuted woman, and may really ask ourselves which suffered most from persecution, she or Napoleon.

Convinced at last that she must renounce her hope of domineering over the Emperor, Madame

¹⁸ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xv., p. 203, No. 12,550, May 7, 1807.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 216, No. 12,569, May 11, 1807.

de Staël made herself the medium for coalitions against France. She has narrated at great length, and with many details, the story of her wanderings in England, Russia, Prussia and Sweden (in all of which countries she stirred up the zeal of the enemies of her country and paved the way for its overthrow), in her book 'Ten Years of Exile.' We need say no more.

XI.

The Velvet Glove—Napoleon's Longanimity.

IN the preceding section we passed in review the staff of the chief agents in the fall of Napoleon. They were all there—Madame de Staël, Fouché, Talleyrand, Bernadotte, Moreau, Dessoles, Bourrienne, Solignac, and others. They have all themselves repeatedly experienced that Imperial grip, said to be equally savage and unescapable. If, instead of merely scratching them, it had rent them limb from limb, the banks of the Guyane would have been well peopled with men who, on the contrary, remained near the Imperial throne, bent on secretly undermining it, while swearing fidelity.

If one adds to this already long list the name of Malet, that bold conspirator who, in 1812, left prison to take his place as Commissioner of Police—of Malet, who had been concerned in a plot of which the execution approached the marvellous, because its author, warned by former attempts, understood how to wait until events favourable to

his purpose occurred ; if one notes that this General had already been arrested, and then pardoned, for similar deeds, such as the project of carrying off the First Consul when passing through Dijon to go to Marengo in 1800, and the military conspiracy of 1807 ; if one considers that his chief accomplices in 1812, Lahorie and Guidal,¹ found themselves in a position nearly identical with his own, one is forced to admit that, in doing violence to his habitual generosity, instead of leaving the conspirators the means of incessantly enfeebling his Government, Napoleon would have immensely strengthened his power.

The Emperor frequently said that the French people required to be governed with an iron hand in a velvet glove. We have often seen the velvet glove, but for the iron Napoleon had substituted a metal of a more ductile character. The gentle grasp of that hand served only to arouse his worst enemies, even when it was his duty to strangle them.

In a word, always bearing in remembrance the sufferings and humiliations which he had endured, and those of which he had been a witness, Napoleon set himself to spare others as much as he could, and perhaps more than he ought.

¹ Fouché, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 396 ; Baron Fain, 'Manuscrit de 1813,' t. i., p. 14 ; Desmarest, 'Témoignages Historiques,' p. 5 ; Thibaudeau, 'Histoire de la France et de Napoléon Bonaparte,' t. vi., p. 256.

BOOK VI.

PERSONAL HABITS AND IDEAS

I.

Hereditary Simplicity—Atavism—Letters and Memoirs of Madame de Rémusat—The Man and his Work—Portraits of General Bonaparte and the Emperor—His Honesty of Feeling.

IT was as absurd to try to forge a genealogical chain connecting the man we are about to depict in his hereditary simplicity with people like Castuccio-Castracani, and other robber chiefs of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,¹ as to establish his descent from the princes who reigned at Treviso in the thirteenth century.²

But accounts of illustrious men somewhat resemble those of great travels: they who relate them gladly sacrifice some truth to the extraordinary, in order to strike the imagination of their audience and excite the spirits of the narrator.

Historians who connected Napoleon with the

¹ H. Taine, 'Les Origines de la France Contemporaine,' 'Le Régime Moderne,' t. i., p. 21.

² M. Foissy, 'La Famille Bonaparte depuis 1264,' p. 12.

princely family of Treviso were absolutely determined to put a few drops of royal blood into his veins. Those who have declared him to be the descendant of Italian banditti wished, in the name of the laws of atavism, to show that he was also a brigand.³ If once Darwin be summoned to the rescue, we fail to see why they should not go back to the Apostles, for, in Bonaparte's family, as far as we know it for seven centuries,⁴ there have been as many priests as soldiers.

Let us, then, leave to their peaceful slumbers all these mummies, whose importance rests solely on the opinion or the object of those who write of them.

Monsieur Taine appears not to have been satisfied with these antecedents so sedulously dug up out of annals that might be called pre-historic, but in support of them has thought it necessary to strengthen his arguments by sixty-nine quotations carefully selected from the memoirs of Madame de Rémusat, and serving as foils to extracts from the works of Madame de Staël.

It is rather pitiable to see history paying any attention to the gossip of two blue-stockings, both of whom were incapable of forgiving the

³ H. Taine, 'Origines,' etc., t. i., p. 21.

⁴ Jung, 'Bonaparte et son Temps' (Généalogie), t. i., pp. 300,

burning wrongs inflicted upon their feminine vanity.

To rend in pieces the man who bows one out is the commonplace revenge taken by the weaker sex for any repulse, and it was also the natural consequence of the long visit paid by Madame de Rémusat to the Emperor at Pont-de-Briques (near Boulogne) when she thought she had gained vast influence over him. How can we reconcile the horrors set forth in the memoirs with the enthusiasm, or rather the fetichism, with which Napoleon inspired Madame de Rémusat after those long evenings together, except by a bitter disappointment?

We must seek for an exact reflection of her thoughts in the letters written by her from day to day to her husband, rather than in a publication long thought over, like her memoirs.

‘I really long,’ she writes to Monsieur de Rémusat, ‘to be near the Empress, and I might also say near the Emperor, if that would not be disrespectful to him. You tell me nothing of his return.’⁵

Monsieur de Rémusat fancies he has a cause of complaint against the Emperor. She immediately undertakes the defence of the Sovereign :

‘What has happened to you? Some slight

⁵ ‘Letters of Madame de Rémusat,’ t. i., p. 31, September 16, 1804.

displeasure on the part of the Emperor has perhaps hurt you for the moment. He has on more than one occasion done you full justice, and your mind is too sensible not to put at its proper value some little display of sharpness which is in his nature, and which may be excused by the multitude of affairs that he has to occupy and worry him.⁶

She is quite capable of scolding her husband and writing to him thus :

‘ My chief wish is that you should please the Emperor, and that he should do justice to your zeal, and that because I am sincerely attached to him.’⁷

She shows her impatience to see the Emperor in these lines :

‘ For my own part, in spite of the good that rest and idleness are doing to my health, I desire his return here, which will renew all the excitement, if I may say so, that the presence of a great man always causes, and which, though sometimes it wearies, yet always interests me!’⁸

And she grows quite poetic when she exclaims :
‘ This is truly a miraculous campaign ! and I say,

⁶ ‘ Letters of Madame de Rémusat,’ t. i., p. 44, September 19, 1804.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55, September 23, 1804.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 135, May 11, 1805.

like a good provincial who wrote to my mother yesterday : ("By the side of our Emperor, Cæsar and Alexander would only have been lieutenants!")

If Monsieur de Rémusat, Napoleon's chamberlain in Vienna, ever laid the impressions of the public, as interpreted by Madame, before the Emperor, the latter must have smiled at hearing that 'the French are rather like women, exacting, and in a hurry. It is true that the Emperor has spoiled us during this campaign, and certainly lover was never more anxious to satisfy the every wish of his mistress, than his Majesty has been to satisfy our desires.'⁹

The return of the Emperor to Paris after the war produced an unfavourable result in the mind of Madame de Rémusat. Why did his presence, so ardently desired, have the effect of chilling, little by little, her ardour, which in 1808 gave place to a sort of ill-concealed spite? And yet neither the glory of France nor the personal genius of Napoleon had diminished.

How enigmatical is the heart of a woman who appears to be taking a revenge, in these long-delayed memoirs, in direct contradiction to her former sentiments!

In spite of the little confidence that the lucubra-

⁹ 'Letters of Madame de Rémusat,' p. 390, December 11, 1805.

tions of these two women, wounded by the same arrow, deserve, we must walk along the road traced for us by our eminent predecessors, and penetrate into the infinite details of Napoleon's private life, admitting, as we must, with Monsieur Taine, that 'never has any individual character so profoundly stamped its mark upon a collective work, so that, to understand the work, we must first study the character.'¹⁰

The officer, until the time of the Consulate, was small, possessed of the leanness which is called aristocratic, but which bears upon it the stamp of wretched misery. Such he remained while painfully pursuing his path, lost in the ranks of officers more or less noble like himself.

Quite a different man appeared when the day dawned upon which he took the place reserved for him by destiny—a place which was the first in his country, because it was also the first among that group of workers who still retained the moral virtues cast off by a dissolute nobility. Napoleon could only place himself at the head of this important group because he united in himself all the aspirations, all the rights and all the capabilities of the middle class.

From the physiological and psychological points of view, we may say that from the hour when he

¹⁰ H. Taine, 'Origines,' etc., t. i., p. 4.

ceased to be the small landowner which he was by birth, he became the middle-class man which he was thenceforward, and of which he ever afterwards remained the exact personification.

Put side by side the portrait of General Bonaparte by Guérin, and that of the Emperor by Isabey ; you will be struck by their absolute contrast ; you will scarcely find any points of resemblance in the two faces.

In the first, you have a thin, weedy young man, with a wrinkled face. His forehead is barely visible, concealed as it is by a thick curtain of hair that falls on either side down to his collar, and which seems to hide the fastenings of a mask carefully laid over the face. This was the period of hard experiences, of injustice, of suspicions. Those thin, contracted lips, sentinels repressing every word that might mean ruin, those piercing eyes, seeking to discover an ambush, but whereon images are only impressed after passing through cavities hollowed under the eyelids by melancholy and distrust—these are all explained by the pangs of hunger, by imprisonment with the guillotine in view, by disgrace, by the possession of talents and lofty courage, compelled by circumstances to humiliate itself before stupid or obstinate sectaries. The bitter expression of the face is heightened by prominent cheek-bones, which, below the temples, compress the face like pincers,

giving it a tortured, emaciated expression, which compels our pity.

On the other hand, see the Emperor in Isabey's picture. The unhealthy leanness has developed in sunshine, like a shrub removed from dark, dismal surroundings. The lean, lanky figure has filled out ; the angular face has become oval, the lines have softened down under the benign influence of fortune and independence. No enigmatical wig is now to be seen ; the hair is cut short over a bold, high forehead ; the expression is calm and serene. The eyes have come to a level with the cheeks, and reflect thought spontaneously. The mouth, slightly opened, droops its lower lip as if to give free passage to the words which fall readily. In short, the whole person gives one an impression of imposing rotundity, but withal kindly and genial.

It is easy to reconstitute the roots in his moral nature, upon which were successively grafted the principal traits of his character. Everything in his early education united to inculcate in him the severest principles of life face to face with material requirements.

The child brought up by ruined parents with a large family can only get from them ideas of order and economy, together with the desire to relieve more and more in the future the troubles of those nearest him.

Are not family affection, honour, probity, order, economy, a desire to rise, the very bases upon which the middle classes are founded?

These virtues were dear to Napoleon throughout his life.

One may observe them even from the moment when character first asserted itself in the child.

Cadet of the King of France or Protector of the Kings of Europe, he developed and retained the same sentiments. Let us recall, for instance, his relations to his mother. Through them all one perceives the respectful son, constantly mindful of the privations which she endured for his sake. At the *École Militaire*, controlling his own sorrow, he becomes the comforter of the poor woman who weeps for her husband. Next it was to the maternal hearth that he sent his savings when Lieutenant, from Valence and from Auxonne. Yet later the General's pay supported all the family at Marseilles. It is his mother whom you recognise, in Italy, close to the triumphant commander. It is she who sits beside the throne of the most powerful monarch in the world; it is she who establishes herself on the Isle of Elba; lastly, it is she who implores, from the gaolers of her son, the favour of being permitted to rejoin him at St. Helena. Could we, in even the humblest household, find more unbroken and

praiseworthy observance of the mutual duties of parent and child?

Next to filial love comes equally genuine brotherly affection. His brothers and sisters may, in their greediness, have accused Napoleon of hardness and egotism. The truth, drawn from other sources than these selfish clamours, is, the tyrannical proceedings attributed to him are contradicted in the pages of history by the vast riches, the titles, the kingdoms, lavished upon relations who were unworthy of them.

Not less deep-rooted was friendship with Napoleon. The humblest individuals, comrades or strangers, having once aroused his attention or sympathy, found themselves, at all stages of his career, gathered round him, supported, covered with benefactions. And even at the hour of death, whilst making his will, every stroke of the passing bell seemed to awake in his heart some tender memory.

This perfect loyalty of feeling cannot but excite surprise in the man of his time the least inclined to fanciful visions and to all speculative contemplations. He never hesitated to show an instinctive repugnance against 'idealogues,' often remarking that 'metaphysicians were his bugbears.'¹¹

He had inherited both these mental tendencies, apparently so contradictory—one towards essen-

¹¹ Jung, '*Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte*,' t. ii., p. 224.

tially moral bonds, the other towards exclusively material objects ; from the cradle he had been taught the highest respect for domestic duty ; soon afterwards the hard realities of life had been revealed to him in the misery which brooded over his father's house.

II.

Hyperbolical Flattery—Victor Hugo—Ministers—Magistrates
—Officials—Academicians—Bishops—The Emperor's
Resistance—Contempt for Human Grandeur—Loftiness
of Soul.

CONSCIOUS of his obscure origin, which was always before his eyes, Napoleon throughout his life remained a man of reality. Nothing dazzled him. When he had reached the summit of human grandeur, all the pomp, all the magnificence displayed before him, only inspired him with these words :

‘How can anyone pretend that empty names, titles given for the sake of a political system, can change in the smallest degree one's relations with one's friends and associates? I am called Sire or Imperial Majesty without anyone in my household believing or thinking that I am a different man in consequence. All those titles form part of a *system*, and therefore they are necessary.’¹

He must indeed have possessed a strong head,

¹ Roederer, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 513.

or it would have been completely turned by all the fulsome flattery that was lavished upon him. Never was human being adulated as Napoleon was. The limits of hyperbole were strained to their utmost on his account. The praises of an idolatrous nation prostrate before its gods can alone be compared to the panegyrics declaimed in honour of the Emperor. This exaggerated flattery was not only the outpouring of servile courtiers, for, after the death of Napoleon, in 1823, Victor Hugo found plenty of echoes in French hearts for the ode he wrote to the 'Arc de Triomphe' :

'Dis aux siècles le nom de leur chef magnanime,
Qu'on lise sur ton front que nul laurier sublime
A des glaives français ne peut se dérober.
Lève-toi jusqu'aux cieux, portique de victoire !
Que le géant de notre gloire
Puisse passer sans se courber.'²

Side by side with this posthumous acclamation let us place some specimens of contemporary speeches.

'It is, indeed, the throne of Charlemagne raising itself once more after ten centuries,' says Lacretelle the elder.³

'God has taken pleasure in endowing this hero with every great quality !' exclaims Monge.⁴

'The earth,' says Jubé, 'was silent before

² 'Odes et Ballades : A l'Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile.'

³ *Moniteur* of the 8 Floréal, year xiii., p. 915, col. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, February 6, 1807, p. 143, col. 1.

Alexander, who wished to enslave it; before Napoleon, the earth, the seas he has crossed, the universe that he fills with his name, tell aloud the greatness of his soul, the glory of his arms, the wonders of his reign, the gratitude of nations, as though to serve as authentic witnesses to history.⁵

Fontanes is unwearied in his eulogies. One day he exclaims :

‘The man before whom the universe is silent is also the man in whom the universe confides. He is at once the terror and the hope of nations. He came not to destroy, but to repair.’⁶

On another occasion the same orator says :

‘The Emperor is too much accustomed to conquer to make it necessary for us to remark upon it. It is enough for us to say that after a few marches he went far beyond the point at which Charlemagne stopped, and that, superior to all the great men who have preceded him, he will find no Roncevaux.’⁷

Chaptal exclaims in language that gives us no reason to anticipate the hostile tone of his memoirs, of which Monsieur Taine has presented us with some unpublished fragments :

⁵ *Moniteur* of the 6 Vendémiaire, year xiv., p. 24, col. 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, March 6, 1806, p. 259, col. 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, January 1, 1809, p. 114, col. 1. Roncevaux is a village in Navarre, in a valley leading from France to Spain across the Pyrenees. The rear-guard of Charlemagne’s army perished there with the paladin Roland, A.D. 778. — *Translator*.

‘What a spectacle for all nations! Conquered peoples salute Napoleon as a liberator, and it is reserved for him alone to obtain their gratitude and to merit their blessings.’⁸

A philosopher, one of the least excitable of men by vocation, Laplace, writes in one of his scientific works :

‘Thanks to the genius of the Emperor, the whole of Europe will soon form but one immense family, united by one religion and by one code of laws, and posterity, which will profit completely by these advantages, will pronounce with admiration the name of the hero, its benefactor.’⁹

The following words fell from the mouth of Lacépède :

‘We cannot worthily praise his Majesty, his glory is too high ; we ought to be at the distance of posterity from him to realize his immense elevation.’¹⁰

François de Neufchateau, no less ardent and even more classical, exclaims :

‘What god prepared this leisure for us? This extraordinary man it is who has rejuvenated France.’¹¹

⁸ *Moniteur*, January 16, 1806, p. 67, col. 1.

⁹ ‘Exposition du Système du Monde,’ 4th edition, 1813, t. i., pp. 142, 143.

¹⁰ *Moniteur*, July 29, 1807, p. 816, col. 11.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 24 Prairial, year xiii., p. 1100, col. 11.

‘If a man of the time of the Medicis or of Louis XIV. were to return to earth,’ said Molé, ‘and at the sight of so many wonders asked how many glorious reigns—nay, centuries of peace—it had required to produce them, you would answer that twelve years of war and of the rule of one man have been sufficient.’¹²

Séguier is not to be outdone, and he exclaims :

‘Napoleon is above human history ; he belongs to heroic periods, and is beyond all admiration.’¹³

It is by an invocation to Molière that, in his maiden speech to the French Academy, Étienne expresses his enthusiasm : ‘No, Molière, you do not vainly implore this invincible monarch. He hears your complaints amidst the tumult of the camp, and from the height of his triumphal car he extends to you a protecting hand. Then your voice proclaims his benefits ; intoxicated with gratitude, you cry again — “We live under a prince equally great and just.” All France echoes your words, and you prophetically utter the thoughts of future centuries.’¹⁴

Even the language of Étienne may appear tame beside that held at a similar ceremony by the dramatic poet Raynouard : ‘The laureate of Napoleon will, following history, represent him

¹² *Moniteur*, March 12, 1813, p. 266, col. 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, July 29, 1807, p. 817, col. 1.

¹⁴ Discourse of M. Étienne, *Moniteur*, November 10, 1811, p. 1198, col. 1.

towering above kings, as Homer, following legend, represented Jupiter towering above the gods—ruling the universe by the power of his will, always ready to seize with his powerful hand one extremity of the chain of Destiny, and, though all his enemies combined to hold down the other, always certain to drag them behind him.¹⁵

Nor were the clergy more sparing in their praise.

‘Invisible Providence,’ said Jalabert, Vicar-General, at Notre Dame, ‘designed this Emperor to be the visible providence of the whole nation.’¹⁶

‘Who, before him, ever closed so many wounds, dried so many tears, put an end to so many calamities, and made so many people happy?’ asks the Bishop of Vannes.¹⁷

Still more pompous is the style of the Bishop of Agen :

‘Let him live and command victory and peace, this new Augustus, this great Emperor! Let him live independent of all his dignities, for it is from the hands of God Himself that he has received the crown.’ ‘*Augusto a Deo coronato, magno et pacifico imperatori vita et victoria.*’¹⁸

To conclude our quotations we will reproduce

¹⁵ Raynouard, ‘Discours de Réception à l’Académie,’ 1807.

¹⁶ ‘Procès-Verbal du Service Solennel célébré à Notre-Dame en Mémoire des Braves Morts à Austerlitz,’ p. 11, Paris, 1806.

¹⁷ *Moniteur*, 11 Messidor, year xii., p. 1274, col. 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 8 Messidor, year xii., p. 1263, col. 3.

the words of the Bishop of Mayence, who cried :

‘Let the earth be hushed in this solemn moment, and let it listen in silence and with respect to the voice of Napoleon.’¹⁹

Such was the tone of inflated phraseology that the principal men in France lavished unblushingly upon Napoleon. We are inclined to believe that the Emperor did not seek this farrago of nonsense which ranked him with the gods for his personal gratification, but that he tolerated it for the sake of the ‘system,’ as he said to Roederer.

We may notice that Napoleon never—although nobody could have done it more easily—gave himself the cheap apotheosis of a triumphal entry into Paris at the head of his victorious legions, and he could say with truth of himself :

‘I have never sought the applause of the Parisians ; I am not an operatic monarch.’²⁰

Neither did he ever do it except in foreign capitals, when he was obliged for political reasons to strike terror into the population.

It must not be supposed, moreover, that he feared an explosion of public feeling in France. That would be wrong in principle, seeing the

¹⁹ *Moniteur*, 8 Nivôse, year xiv., p. 376, col. 1.

²⁰ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxvii., p. 305, No. 21,467, to King Joseph, March 12, 1814.

proofs of attachment to which his presence invariably gave rise, and such a theory would be groundless, seeing the state of real perfection of the police under the Empire. Everyone knows that, by the help of a well-organized police force, a Sovereign, however unpopular he may be, can always be covered with flowers or deafened by acclamations wherever he goes.

Marshal Marmont states that in 1797 'General Bonaparte showed himself insensible to the glory of entering Rome as a conqueror.'²¹

In his indifference to show, he rebuked his courtiers and reduced their exaggerated flattery to its just proportions. When the seat of government was moved from the Luxembourg to the Tuileries, the First Consul said to Bourrienne :

'You are very lucky ; you are not obliged to make a spectacle of yourself. I have to go about with a cortège ; it bores me, but it appeals to the eye of the people.'²²

'It was he himself,' says Monsieur de Girardin, 'who desired Monsieur Fontanes to suppress one-third of the praises,'²³ when, during his visits to Paris, which were not frequent, he knew beforehand what speeches were being prepared for him.

²¹ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 262.

²² Bourrienne, 'Mémoires,' t. iii., p. 319.

²³ 'Journal et Souvenirs,' t. ii., p. 353.

He wrote to Champagny and said :

‘As a general rule, the best way to praise me is to do things which may inspire the nation, the young and the army with heroic feelings.’²⁴

Amid the splendid and uninterrupted receptions arranged for him during his journey through Belgium and Holland in 1811, Napoleon said to the Duke of Vicenza :

‘This is a convict’s work ! I would rather go through ten campaigns than live the life that I have spent for the last month.’²⁵

So indifferent was he to the honours paid him on his way through a certain town, that at the very moment when he was being received with frenzied acclamations, he was calmly elaborating a most complicated plan of maritime operations which he transmitted to Admiral Decrès with this letter :

‘I have just traversed the town of Lyons in great pomp to visit its manufactories, but that has not prevented me from thinking about our affairs.’²⁶

In 1807 models of and designs for a new coinage were submitted to the Emperor with the motto ‘*Napoleone protegge l’ Italia.*’ On the

²⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xiv., p. 203, No. 11,644, January 16, 1806.

²⁵ Duke of Vicenza, ‘*Souvenirs*,’ part ii., t. ii., p. 172.

²⁶ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. x., p. 321, No. 8,582, April 13, 1805.

margin of the descriptive document the Emperor wrote :

‘ This is most unsuitable ; the word proposed to be substituted for “ God protects ” is indecent.’²⁷

These words come well from the pen that in 1808 wrote to the Minister of Marine :

‘ I dispense you from comparing me to God. The phrase is so singular and disrespectful that I wish to believe that you did not reflect upon what you were writing.’²⁸

When the Institute proposed to give the Emperor the title of Augustus or Germanicus in the inscription for the Arc de Triomphe, he answered :

‘ The Emperor’s title is Emperor of the French. He will have no other, neither that of Augustus nor Germanicus, nor even Cæsar.’²⁹

We may, without too much rashness, affirm that his slight attachment to Imperial prerogative was one of the indirect causes of his fall. Had he cared more about sovereign honours he might have treated for peace and preserved a throne, diminished, it is true, but still very brilliant. He would not. (He placed his dignity above his vanity.) In support of this assertion, here is a

²⁷ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xvi., p. 155. No. 13,348, November 11, 1807.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, t. xvii., p. 183, No. 13,960, May 22, 1808.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, t. xix., p. 545, No. 15,894, October 3, 1809.

note presented, in the name of Napoleon, by Caulaincourt to the Congress of Châtillon in 1814 :

‘His Majesty does not care about grandeur, and will never purchase it at the price of abasement.’³⁰

In a later letter to the same Ambassador, the Emperor says :

‘You are always talking about the Bourbons. I would rather see the Bourbons in France, on reasonable terms, than accept the infamous propositions you send me.’³¹

We frequently find Napoleon expressing his contempt for human grandeur. Was he sincere when in 1797 he said to Monge :

‘I shall never be really happy until, after having pacified Europe, I can exchange the title of General of the armies of the Republic for that of magistrate in some country district’?³²

Was he sincere when, in talking to Roederer, on March 6, 1809, about the pride of Joseph and Louis Bonaparte, he concluded :

‘I am the one of the three who would be most capable of living in retirement at Mortefontaine’?³³

³⁰ Duke of Vicenza, ‘Souvenirs,’ t. i., p. 367, official text of a note presented to the Congress, dated Paris, January 19, 1814.

³¹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxvii., p. 206, No. 21,315, February 19, 1814.

³² Gohier, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 41.

³³ Roederer, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 542.

One is tempted to believe that he was, when one considers, in connection with those words, the indubitable resignation with which, in 1814, he accepted a fall which precipitated him from the vastest Empire in Europe, and left him only the sovereignty of that mushroom, emerging from the waters of the Mediterranean, known as the Island of Elba. With reference to that moment, Monsieur de Bausset, Prefect of the Palace, says :

‘I found Napoleon calm, tranquil and decided. I mentioned the Isle of Elba to him.

“The air is good there,” he said, “and the people charming. I shall do very well, and I hope that Maria-Louisa will not be too uncomfortable, either.”³⁴

Later on, too, in 1815, when all is definitely lost, so completely is the Emperor’s mind detached from mundane matters that, on the road from Rochefort which was to lead him to St. Helena, he asks for some books out of the library at Trianon, the ‘Iconographie Grecque’ of Monsieur de Visconti, and a copy of the ‘Institut d’Egypte.’³⁵

This unity of thought in the First Consul and in the Emperor seems to us clearly proved, and Monsieur de Bausset was right in saying :

³⁴ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 300.

³⁵ Fleury de Chaboulon, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 206 ; ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxviii., p. 300, No. 22,064, June 25, 1815.

‘The greater number of these lofty inscriptions, of these exaggerated praises, published with so much splendour and scattered over so many public monuments, were not all to the taste of Napoleon, and still less were they his choice. Few men in his position would have shown so much modesty and simplicity. He refused Marshal Kellermann, acting in the name of a great number of citizens, permission to erect a statue to his glory. Napoleon wished to merit the homage of his subjects by his entire life, and that was his answer. The architect Poyer also failed to obtain leave to erect a triumphal column, by subscription, to the glory of the Emperor. Napoleon was always more taken up with monuments of public utility than with those of empty glorification.’³⁶

This assertion is confirmed by the following trait, mentioned by Thibaudeau:³⁷

‘In 1802, the General Council of the Seine, wishing to erect in Paris a monument destined to show to posterity its gratitude towards Bonaparte, adopted a proposal for a triumphal portico on the place occupied by the Grand Châtelet, and voted, on the motion of Quatremère de Quincy, a sum of 600,000 francs (£24,000) for the purpose. In

³⁶ De Bausset, ‘*Mémoires*,’ t. ii., p. 71.

³⁷ ‘*Histoire de la France et de Napoléon Bonaparte*,’ t. ii., p. 503.

answer to this homage, the First Consul wrote to the Council :

“I notice with gratitude the feelings that animate the magistrates of Paris. The notion of dedicating monuments to men who render services to the people is honourable to nations. I accept the offer of a monument that you have made me ; let the place remain chosen, but let us leave to coming ages the task of constructing it if they ratify the good opinion you have of me.”

To show one's self thus insensible to the intoxication of vanity, not to believe one's self at least a demi-god, after a *crescendo* of eulogy lasting for eleven years, it is necessary to be something more than vulgarly ambitious ; it is necessary to have in one's soul the noble pride of the poor village priest who, on holy festivals, arrayed in a cope glittering with gold, walks, amidst his prostrate congregation, under a splendid canopy, but who never for an instant forgets that he is only the representative of a principle which is the sole object of adoration, and quickly retires to his parsonage, where he resumes his accustomed serene and austere simplicity.

III.

The Man of *System* and the Private Man—The Emperor's Toilet—His Health—His Letters—His Secretaries.

IT is impossible to consider attentively the moral portrait of Napoleon without perceiving, as in his physical portrait, a double image.

In the foreground we have the man of a 'system,' to use his own expression ; that is to say, the holder of the highest rank in the administrative hierarchy, who had achieved the Herculean task of rescuing France from the precipice down which she threatened to vanish for ever.

To re-establish and maintain the principle of authority, nothing less would suffice than to infuse into civil regulations the element of military discipline, with its blind faith and its vaguely superstitious worship of a Commander-in-Chief who sways his troops by a sort of personal fascination. This typical supremacy Napoleon exercised to an extent which excited the ridicule of the Royalists. Rash ridicule, easily retaliated on their own kings, with this difference, that there

is no difficulty in perceiving where the Emperor, accustomed as he had been from the age of nine both to submit and to command, had learnt the art of governing men.

To few kings, it is incontestable, has it been given to carry to such a lofty height the somewhat theatrical pomp of sovereignty. If one may judge by the speeches from which we have taken portions, and from the multiplicity of emblems, images, medals, statues, which the period of the Empire has bequeathed to us, the *man of system* was particularly successful in his methods.

In the background we find the features of the only man in France, or perhaps even in Europe, who is not dazzled by the tinsel and glitter of which he had carefully calculated the effect upon the people. Napoleon identified himself so completely, whenever necessary, with the exigencies of Imperial rank, that it is difficult to believe him to have been playing a part. One imagines one's self the victim of an illusion when one sees the Sovereign put off his supreme functions and become the simple, temperate, easy-going, economical man that the Sub-lieutenant of artillery used to be. We find nothing of the comedian's art about him, but only the public man giving place to the private, the official giving place to the ordinary individual.

Constant, his valet, used to enter the Emperor's

room every morning about seven o'clock.¹ There, disorder reigned supreme, proving that, on the previous evening, the solemn etiquette of the *coucher* of the King had been somewhat neglected. His clothes were scattered in all directions, his coat on the ground, his grand cordon on the carpet, his hat on a chair, and so on with all his garments.

His first question always referred to the hour and the weather. The only luxury the Emperor permitted himself when he rose was a fire in his dressing-room, even in the height of summer. He liked heat to such an extent that, says Bourrienne,² 'he used to take his bath at such a temperature that a dense cloud of steam filled his room and necessitated all the doors being opened.'

After his bath he was always rubbed with eau-de-Cologne. During this operation, the freest conversation was indulged in between Napoleon and his valet.

'His Majesty,' says Constant, 'would question me respecting all I had done the previous day. He would ask me if I had dined out, and with whom; if I had been kindly received, and what we had had for dinner. He often, too, would wish to know the price of portions of my dress.

¹ Constant, 'Mémoires.' t. ii., pp. 41-48.

² 'Mémoires,' t. iv., p. 208.

I told him, and he would exclaim at the prices, and say that when he was a Sub-lieutenant everything was much cheaper, that he had often dined at Roze's, a restaurant of that time, and that he had dined there very well, moreover, for forty sous' (1s. 8d.).³

'One of the things that most astonished Madame Walewska,' says Sismondi,⁴ 'was hearing Napoleon, when going to bed, chatting with his valet, making him repeat to him all the gossip of the town, even the speeches and quarrels of the servants.'

The morning conversations were sometimes interrupted by the arrival of the Court physician, whom the Emperor would greet thus :

'Well, you quack, have you killed many people yet to-day?'

'Dr. Corvisart,' says Roustam in his memoirs,⁵ 'was not in the least abashed, and answered in a similar tone.'

The Emperor professed, with regard to doctors, a scepticism that only accompanies perfect health. A man endowed with his marvellous mental equilibrium, the characteristic of Napoleon's works, a man who spent as many days travelling along highroads, and nights in tents, as he did days in

³ 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 43.

⁴ 'Revue Historique,' t. ix., p. 366.

⁵ See also 'Revue Rétrospective' for 1888, pp. 122-127.

his palace and nights in his bed, neither was nor could be delicate.

We may leave to the inventors of legends the stories of the eczema contracted at the siege of Toulon, and driven inwards to the internal organs ; the epilepsy, which served to render plausible, and to explain medically, the scenes of imaginary violence accompanied with rolling eyes, foaming lips, and kicks in the stomach of those he disagreed with ; and, lastly, the illness with which he is said to have gone to Waterloo.

The Emperor's stature was not so small as is generally supposed. His soldiers in Italy had certainly christened him the Little Corporal, but that was rather in allusion to his youthful and weakly appearance. The crowd, which only saw him at a distance, may well have thought him short, in comparison with most of the Generals who escorted him, for, like Frederick of Prussia, he had a mania for surrounding himself with fine men. Napoleon measured exactly, on his death-bed,⁶ five feet two inches four lines. He was, therefore, about the medium height of our days.

⁶ 'Mémoires du Docteur F. Antommarchi,' t. ii., p. 153. Contemporaries admit the same measurement. Constant gives 5 feet 3 inches, and Mallet du Pan, 'Correspondence,' t. ii., p. 141, says : 'This little General of 5 feet 3 inches.' If the proverbial gray overcoat, now in the museum at the Invalides, be measured, it will be found that it could not have been worn by a very short man. It measures 1 metre 25 centimetres (4 feet 3 inches) in

His legs were short, his body long and very much developed, and his head slightly sunk between his shoulders. His head was twenty-two inches in circumference,⁷ and was consequently large. It was also very sensitive. Constant tells us that he had to soften the Emperor's hats by wearing them for some days before giving them to him.⁸

Clothed in a soft white dressing-gown and trousers, and his head covered with the Madras handkerchief that served him as a night-cap,⁹ the Emperor used to shave himself before a glass held by his valet, and then he dressed for the day.¹⁰ His tortoise-shell snuff-box, which he nearly always carried in his hand,¹¹ was then presented to him, and Napoleon went into his study, where his secretaries awaited him.

To see him, at that early hour, reading his innumerable letters, examining the masses of papers accumulated on his table, one would have thought he was rather the head of a large business establishment, anxious about his affairs, than a

length, which is a good deal for a coat worn daily, on foot and on horseback, by an active man who could tolerate no hindrance to his movements.

⁷ Measure taken from the hat at the Invalides.

⁸ Constant, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 33.

⁹ *Ibid.*, t. ii., p. 43.

¹⁰ De Bausset, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 63.

¹¹ Kotzebue, 'Souvenirs de Paris,' t. i., p. 134.

Sovereign who had reached the summit of prosperity.

Far from soaring, in imitation of former monarchs, into an empyrean of unruffled calm, Napoleon, trained from his infancy to daily work, set his secretaries the example of untiring activity. He was no honorary head of his Government, but a ruler practical, strict, responsible for the acts of his Cabinet. Like a conscientious man of business, he abandoned to no one the interests over which he kept guard so well.

‘The Emperor,’ says Meneval,¹² ‘was accustomed to open his own letters. I helped him when I had nothing to do. As soon as a letter was opened, he read it, and often answered it then and there, putting aside others to answer later, and throwing on the floor those that needed no reply.’

According to Fleury de Chaboulon, ‘he himself arranged his own papers, every one of which had its fixed place. Here was all connected with the War Office; there, the budgets and daily reports from the Treasury; in another place, police reports, his secret correspondence with private agents, etc. He replaced carefully, after use, every paper. Beside him, the most punctilious clerk would have been but a bungler.’¹³

¹² ‘Souvenirs,’ t. i., p. 125.

¹³ Fleury de Chaboulon, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 196.

The current correspondence once read and attended to, the next task was to answer the more difficult letters, and to take down the orders that had been thought over by the Emperor, who dictated them, 'walking up and down the room all the time. As he warmed to a subject, he developed a sort of trick, which consisted in twisting his right arm and pulling at the cuff. He rarely wrote himself. To him writing was wearisome; his hand could not move rapidly enough to keep pace with his ideas. He never took up a pen unless by chance he were alone. He left out half the letters in his words. He never would take the trouble to re-read what he had written. If an explanation were asked of him, he would seize his rough copy, tear it up or throw it into the fire, and begin to dictate afresh.'¹⁴

He marched up and down his study with slow and measured step, going from one secretary to another. It was hard work for them, as they had to seize rapidly the improvisations of the Emperor, who had many questions of different kinds to settle at once, and who was indisposed to repeat what he had said. Now and again, however, this hard work, when every pen was hurrying after the master's words, was relieved by an event which raised a laugh; witness the following anecdote:

¹⁴ Meneval, 'Souvenirs,' t. iii., pp. 111, 119, 120.

‘Bélimé, the successful rival of Chateaubriand at the *Académie des Jeux floraux* of Toulouse, was private secretary to Clarke, Minister for War, who sometimes sent him to the Tuileries for the Emperor’s orders. The latter was dictating, with his snuff-box in front of him. Napoleon having turned his back, Bélimé took a pinch. The Emperor saw him in a looking-glass, turned round sharply, and, taking up the snuff-box, presented it to the dumfounded and trembling secretary, with these words :

“ ‘Keep it; it is too small for us both,” and he continued his dictation.’¹⁵

As a hard worker himself, the Emperor could appreciate the efforts of his assistants, and understood how, by kind word or action, to testify his approval when he gave them any extra work.

‘If any work,’ says Meneval,¹⁶ ‘obliged him to get up during the night, the Emperor would send to wake me. I used to find him in his white dressing-gown, with a Madras handkerchief on his head, walking up and down his room. . . . When the work was finished, or sometimes even in the middle of it, he would order *sorbets* and ices. He would ask me which I preferred, and his solicitude even went the length of recommending to me what he thought best for my health. . . . At other

¹⁵ Abbé Audiérne, ‘Anecdotes sur Napoléon I.,’ p. 6.

¹⁶ ‘Souvenirs,’ t. i. and iii., pp. 124 and 134.

times, after work that had lasted a portion of the night, he would advise me to have a bath, and often gave orders himself for it to be prepared.'

This does not imply that Napoleon was always in an angelic temper, or that those who lived near him spent their lives in a perpetual heaven without a cloud. All that we desire to do is to point out that Napoleon was not in a permanent state of irascibility which made it dangerous to approach him, as people have pretended with as much obstinacy as incorrectness.

'When his orders,' says Fleury de Chaboulon,¹⁷ 'had been dictated to us in a moment of excitement, we avoided, as far as possible, submitting them to him for signature the same day, or even the next; they were almost always modified, softened, or destroyed. Napoleon was never angry with us for trying to save him from the dangers of precipitation.'

To overcome the incredulity of biased people, who will complain that they have not heard any remark from the Emperor himself proving that he could accept criticism, and sometimes even provoke it, we will quote some of his own words.

To Berthier he writes :

'The words in my handwriting that you could not read are *bataillon d'élite suisse*.'¹⁸

¹⁷ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 198.

¹⁸ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. x., p. 10, No. 8,089, October 6, 1804.

To a note to Champagny, he adds the following postscript :

‘As this copy is the first that was dictated, there are many alterations necessary in the style. I leave this to you.’¹⁹

To General Clarke :

‘I notice that the letter I signed was badly written. This must often happen, as after dictating I cannot read over my letters. If ever, therefore, you find the smallest slip, or anything, however slight, that you do not understand, you are to inform me.’²⁰

To the same General he writes :

‘I have your answer to my letter, relating to the departure of the Princes from Spain, which I thought had already taken place. I see that I made a mistake. You must not think it strange if, at a moment like this, when I have so much to occupy me, I sometimes take hold of a wrong idea.’²¹

The man who can adopt this frank, moderate tone towards his subordinates was not, whatever people may say to the contrary, a violent mad-man either in his own circle or elsewhere.

¹⁹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xix., p. 488, No. 15,835, September 22, 1819.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, t. xxv., p. 110, No. 19,742, March 20, 1813.

²¹ *Ibid.*, t. xxvii., p. 205, No. 21,313, February 19, 1814.

IV.

Favourite Songs—Kindness to Servants—The Empress's Toilet—Joviality of the Emperor—A Sovereign easy to serve.

HAVING concluded his work in his study, the Emperor used to pay a visit to the Empress in her apartments. He used to hum, in the most unmusical voice imaginable, his favourite songs, which were not of a very high order. For instance :

‘ Ah ! c'en est fait, je me marie ’;
or else,

‘ Non, non, z'il est impossible
D'avoir un plus aimable enfant.’¹

If, on his way, he happened to meet any of the persons attached to the general service of the Palace, he treated them as kindly as his particular attendants.

‘ He was always extremely polite to everybody,’

¹ Madame Durand, ‘Mémoires,’ p. 24; Duchesse d'Abrantès, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iv., p. 380; Constant, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iv., p. 87; De Chaboulon, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 195.

says Mdlle. Avrillon,² 'and never accepted the slightest service from anyone without thanking him. He never addressed his own valets except as "monsieur." When he passed through their anterooms he always bowed to them. It was just the same when the Emperor came to see the Empress. He never spoke to us without great politeness, and often with great kindness.'

Madame Durand, wife of the General of that name, gives the same testimony :

'He was kind and good to those who were about him.'³

This kindness was not merely superficial ; it formed part of a set of principles brought by Napoleon from his native home, where, according to the old custom, the servants were special objects of solicitude to their masters.

'He took so much interest in everyone connected with his Household that nobody, not even an odd man, could be dismissed without his authority ; he required a report of every case.'

'Remember,' he said to Duroc, the Grand Marshal of the Palace, 'that nobody must be dismissed from my house for a trifle. A dismissal from my service would be a stain on his character, and he would never succeed in obtaining another situation.'

'If, in conformity with the laws of etiquette, he

² 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 240.

³ 'Mémoires,' p. 30.

sent one of his Chamberlains to inquire after any great person who was ill, he also sent, out of real affection, to ask after the health of persons attached to his service.⁴

In the Empress's room, Napoleon showed himself 'amiable, gay, and familiar. If he were present at her toilet, he would amuse himself by teasing her, pinching her neck and cheeks. Did she object, he would take her in his arms, kiss her, call her "great stupid," and peace would be remade. He annoyed her principal ladies-in-waiting in a thousand ways. It often happened that he received an answer back, and then he continued the discussion, and was highly delighted if he succeeded in making angry one of the younger ladies, some of whom were very outspoken and unaccustomed to the manners of a Court, and who used to say to him things that were very amusing from their simplicity.'⁵

Such is the account given by Madame Durand, lady-in-waiting to Maria-Louisa.

In the time of Joséphine matters were not different, if we may believe one of the ladies of the latter, who shows us the Emperor in the Empress's apartments after the ceremony of his coronation as King of Italy :

'He was in mad spirits, laughing and rubbing

⁴ Mdle. Avrillon, '*Mémoires*,' t. i., pp. 261, 367, 460.

⁵ Madame Durand, '*Mémoires*,' pp. 30, 31.

his hands, and in his good humour he even addressed me :

‘ “ Well, mademoiselle,” he said, “ did you have a good view of the ceremony ? Did you hear what I said when I placed the crown upon my head ? ”

‘ He then repeated in almost the identical voice he had used in the cathedral :

‘ “ God has given it to me. Let him who touches it beware ! ” ’⁶ (*Dieu me l’a donnée, gare à qui y touche !*)

Is anyone spiteful enough to see in these stories the truth more or less distorted by people proud of appearing to have been honoured with the familiarity of a great man ? Granting that it is difficult to gather the most trustworthy information as to a man’s character from attached servants who are in close attendance on him night and day, one may emerge from the narrow sphere in which the preceding narrators moved, and gather other evidence, strangely confirmatory. Thus, after the ladies-in-waiting, the valets, the secretaries, all of whom were in a position to know, we will take the Duke of Vicenza’s account :⁷

‘ What is no less surprising is the ease with which, in his family circle, he could become simple and almost familiar.’

⁶ Mdlle. Avrillon, ‘ Mémoires,’ t. i., pp. 191, 192.

⁷ ‘ Souvenirs,’ part ii., t. i., p. 71.

Monsieur de Bausset says :⁸

‘I dare affirm that few men, in their domestic life, have been more equable in temper, more kindly in manner.’

Here are other witnesses who cannot be accused of sympathy : Bourrienne, for example, who has no reason to emphasize Napoleon’s good qualities, who, indeed, might be interested in denying them, to account for his own disgrace, and who yet declares :

‘In his every-day life he was, if the word be not too strong, familiar, and very indulgent.’⁹

Finally, Prince Metternich, who certainly cannot be accused of servility, tells us that :

‘In his private life Napoleon was simple, and often even inclined to spoil people. He pushed his indulgence sometimes to the verge of weakness.’¹⁰

Even if all this testimony, so imposing from the competency of the witnesses, from the diversity of their origins, and from the similarity in their conclusions, did not exist, material facts, which are ineffaceable, would suffice to prove Napoleon’s kindness towards his immediate surroundings.

From 1801 to 1814 the Emperor always had

⁸ ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 13.

⁹ Bourrienne, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 234.

¹⁰ ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 286.

the same valet, Constant Wainj, who lost his situation at Fontainebleau after the abdication through using for his own purposes the sum of 100,000 francs (£4,000) that was in the Imperial cash-box. He was replaced by Marchand, who was with the Emperor at his death in St. Helena.

Throughout his whole career Napoleon had only three private secretaries—that is to say, secretaries living in perpetual contact with him.

The first was his fellow-pupil at Brienne; Napoleon was only ten years old when he first knew him. That was Bourrienne, who during five years filled the office of secretary to his old school-fellow, first when he was Commander-in-Chief and then as First Consul. We know that the latter had to forego the services of his friend, who abused his position and drew from it enormous sums of money.

‘I bet,’ said Napoleon to Corvisart one day, ‘that if I shut Bourrienne up alone in the Tuileries gardens, he would eventually find a silver-mine there.’¹¹

‘I do not think that I ever met a more debased man than Monsieur de Bourrienne,’ says the Baron de Barante;¹² ‘his one thought was how to procure money.’

¹¹ Roustam, ‘Mémoires’; ‘Revue Rétrospective,’ 1888, p. 122.

¹² ‘Souvenirs,’ t. ii., p. 545.

Bourrienne was succeeded by Meneval, who was already in the Cabinet, and who, after nine years' work, passed, on account of his health, from Napoleon's service into that of the Empress Maria-Louisa.

After Meneval came the Baron de Fain, who continued his functions as secretary to the Directory, with Napoleon, till 1814.

Immediately after his name we find that of Monsieur Estève, who was up to the very last treasurer of the Imperial Civil List, who had charge of the funds of the Commander-in-Chief during the expedition to Egypt, and who afterwards became Comptroller of the Household of the First Consul.¹³

We will, of course, admit that these men desired to keep their places. But it is not enough, to remain in a person's service, to make every sacrifice one's self; the master must not be a violent and disagreeable man, flying into violent passions for nothing, of which the first effect is, generally speaking, to drive away servants who can be replaced without the smallest difficulty. For posts such as those about the Emperor, there were probably as many candidates as there were men in France who could hold a brush or a pen.

Nor is that all. Take the '*Annuaire Impérial*'

¹³ Mollien, '*Mémoires*,' t. iv., p. 64.

of the end of the reign. Therein will be found the names of those who, since the Consulate, and even before it, have been Napoleon's assiduous fellow-labourers, whose lives were spent, so to speak, under his shadow. They were such men as Lebrun, Cambacérès, Fouché, Talleyrand, Duroc, Berthier, Junot, Marmont, Clarke, Régnier, Gaudin, Decrès, Mollien, Murat, Lacuée, Réal, Saint-Jean-d'Angely, Fontanes and Ganteaume.¹⁴

All these men, even the chiropodist Tobias-Koën,¹⁵ who was at Malmaison in 1801 and at the Tuileries during the Hundred Days in 1815,¹⁶ by their uninterrupted presence, prove the indisputable truth of the evidence given by Napoleon's secretaries and servants, that he was, at home, a man regular in his habits, easy to serve, peaceable and not violent ; that is to say, the very antipodes of the harsh, despotic, unnatural creature who has been set up as the hero of what we might call the black Napoleonic legend.

¹⁴ 'Almanach Impérial de l'An Bissextil MDCCCXII.'

¹⁵ 'Calendrier de la Cour et de la Ville pour l'An 1812.'

¹⁶ Mdlle. Avrillon, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 172.

V.

The Emperor's Table—His Favourite Dishes—General Supervision — Middle-class Distrust — His Wardrobe — '*Rex*, Regulator.'

THE 'pleasures of the table' did not exist for the Emperor. The simplest food was what pleased him best, such as '*œufs au miroir*' (a form of poached egg); French beans in salad, no made dishes, a little Parmesan cheese, a little Chambertin mixed with water, was what he liked best.¹

'In a campaign or on a march,' he wrote to Duroc, Grand Marshal of the Palace, 'let all the tables, including mine, be served with soup, boiled beef, a roasted joint and some vegetables; no dessert.'²

Twelve minutes was the time allowed at Paris for dinner, which was served at six o'clock. Napoleon used to quit the table, leaving the

¹ Constant, '*Mémoires*,' t. ii., pp. 34-36; De Bausset, t. i., p. 4; Bourrienne, t. iii., p. 208.

² '*Correspondence of Napoleon I.*,' t. xxiv., p. 539, No. 19,608, February 23, 1813.

Empress and the other guests to continue their repast. His breakfast, which he ate alone at half-past nine, never lasted more than eight minutes. It was served on a little round mahogany table, without a napkin.³

‘During the few minutes that his breakfast lasted,’ we are told, ‘he was least Emperor and most man.’

‘If he had time, it was then that he received the persons to whom he had granted the favour, such as Monge, Berthollet, Costaz, Denon, Corvisart, David, Gérard, Isabey, Talma, Fontaine. His conversation was cheerful, easy, and full of charm.’⁴

It was then that he chatted familiarly with those who waited upon him, asking them numerous questions upon what was put before him.

‘Where was that bought? How much did this cost?’ And after receiving their answers, he would add: ‘Things were much cheaper when I was a Sub-lieutenant. I will not pay more than other people.’⁵

Selfishness had no place in his strange and almost incredible parsimony. He did not in the least care to save money. Nobody ever rewarded

³ Constant, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 34.

⁴ Thibaudeau, ‘Histoire de la France et de Napoléon,’ t. v., p. 296.

⁵ Mdle. Avrillon, ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 136.

more generously than he services done to the country. He distributed pensions amounting to fabulous sums. Davoût, the victor of Auerstadt, to quote but one case, received 1,800,000 francs a year (£72,000). Napoleon's two crazes, however, were to spend as little as possible, and not to be cheated. They appear at every stage of his life. At the beginning of the Consulate, when he first came to the Tuileries, he said to Roederer :

‘Do you know how much I have been asked for to provide my establishment at the Tuileries? Two millions (£80,000)! They are robbers! I have given orders that no bills are to be presented to me until they have been reduced to 800,000 francs (£32,000). I am surrounded by cheats. I am obliged to look even more carefully into the expenses that concern me personally.’⁶

The dread of being robbed by his tradespeople is frequently expressed by the Emperor. One day he wrote to the Minister of Police :

‘Monsieur Calmelet, and a certain Bataille whom he employs as architect and decorator, are suspected of having a secret understanding contrary to my interests, and I am strongly inclined to believe what I hear, when I consider that they sent in a bill for 1,000,000 francs (£40,000) for work done in the house of Prince

⁶ Roederer, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 335.

Eugène, upon which, I am convinced, they did not spend more than 200,000 francs (£8,000).'⁷

On another occasion he gives orders to the Minister of Justice to proceed in the proper court against a dyer at Lyons who used an inferior dye for some hangings ordered for Saint-Cloud.⁸

On the subject of the cost of a present given by the Empress, he writes to Prince Eugène :

‘ My son, the Empress has made a present to the Vicereine of Italy of a necklace. I desire that, without the Princess’s knowledge, you should have it valued by a good jeweller, and that you should let me know what they say, so that I may know how far I am robbed by these gentry.’⁹

In 1809 he writes to Count Daru :

‘ My house is full of abuses, and it is time they should be stopped. My Household officers increase the number of servants and the wages paid to them at their goodwill and pleasure, and the result is a deficit in my budget. In 1808 I spent more than is right. If this extravagance goes on, it will bring my Household into disorder. I think that a great many things are done in too lavish a manner; you must do all you can to suppress this.’¹⁰

By natural sequence, as he is strict respecting

⁷ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xi., p. 565, No. 9,721, January 31, 1806.

⁸ *Ibid.*, t. xvi., p. 431, No. 13,671, March 23, 1808.

⁹ *Ibid.*, t. xvi., p. 62, No. 17,205, October 1, 1807.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, t. xviii., p. 269, No. 14,793, February 16, 1809.

the amount of his bills, so he is particular respecting the quality of the goods provided, and shows a knowledge which many a tradesman might envy.

'I desire,' he writes to Duroc, 'to increase in my Palaces the number of pieces of furniture covered with the woollen material of Beauvais and La Savonnerie, because they last well. Velvet and cloth stuffs last only a moment; the Gobelins and the Savonnerie last four times as long.'¹¹

His supervision was carried to such an extent that, on one occasion, chancing to meet one of the Empress's women with a laundress's book in her hand, he took it, looked at the total, thought it too high, and complained to Duroc.

At another time he tried to diminish the quantity of groceries used by issuing signed orders for supplies, differing in amount.¹²

On looking over the household accounts, he would stop at any article—sugar, for example—'calculate the consumption and the number of persons in the house, and decide whether it was reasonable or excessive.'¹³

At other times he would discuss the price of the keep of his horses with his chief steward.¹⁴

¹¹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxi., p. 31, No. 16,779, August 10, 1810.

¹² Mdle. Avrillon, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 173; t. ii., p. 103.

¹³ Thibaudeau, 'Histoire de la France,' etc., t. v., p. 298.

¹⁴ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxi., p. 150, No. 16,959, September 28, 1810.

We find the same vigilance, the same watchfulness amid unlimited opulence, as in the restriction of Elba. There he ordered the Grand Marshal of the Palace to add up all the household books once a week, and to pay them once a month, adding expressly that 'Every leaf of salad, every bunch of grapes, is to be counted.'¹⁵

As he could not endure the smallest waste, he could not invent precautions enough to prevent it. He himself methodically regulated the price of the clothes in his wardrobe, and the time they were to last. He would have five military coats at 360 francs (£14 8s.) apiece, two hunting-coats, one civil coat at 200 francs (£8). Each of these garments was to last three years. Everything is thought out in this list, from the forty-eight flannel vests, of which he is to be given one a week, down to the four dozen handkerchiefs, which are to be used at the rate of a dozen a week, not including the six Madras handkerchiefs, which are to last for three years, and of which he will have a clean one every two months. After enumerating everything—towels, silk stockings, shoes, perfumery, cleaning and washing, after specifying the purchases to be made, the number of articles bought, and the time they

¹⁵ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxviii., p. 368, No. 21,592, no date.

are to be worn—he adds, under the heading of 'Miscellaneous Expenditure':

'Nothing shall be spent except with the approval of his Majesty.'¹⁶

Was this elaborate list drawn up at a moment when he was disturbed or uneasy respecting his future? Not in the least. It was at the very moment when Fortune seemed to have taken up her abode in Napoleon's house; it was six months after the birth of the King of Rome.

In a man whose empire extends from Hamburg to Cadiz, and from Amsterdam to Naples, these minute preoccupations are more than astonishing; they shock our ideas of what is fitting in kings. We are accustomed to picture to ourselves kings as beings on Olympian thrones, gorgeous in purple and gold, exempt from petty calculations and sordid cares, living in boundless abundance, where every sort of corruption can be fostered without detection.

Whether Napoleon did it deliberately, or whether he simply followed his natural inclinations, he established the fundamental truth contained in Carlyle's word, '*Rex, Regulator*,'¹⁷ and not spendthrift.

¹⁶ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxii., p. 419, No. 18,051, August 19, 1811.

¹⁷ 'Heroes and Hero-Worship': 'The Hero as King,' Lecture VI., p. 1, vol. iii., edition 1891.—*Translator*.

However bitter criticism may be, it ought to recognize in Napoleon a sincerity full of independence. Having abolished the luxurious ceremonial of his predecessors at the Tuileries, he disdained to enjoy in his private life the vain satisfactions of self-gratification by which monarchs formerly thought to increase their dignity. By remaining a plain and simple man, he is perhaps more remarkable than by his brilliant military exploits.

VI.

Public and Domestic Finances—Absolute Integrity—Horror of Fraud—Material and Moral Probity—The First Duke of the Empire—Character of a Leader of an Army.

THE Emperor's propensity to busy himself about the trifles of daily life, his carefulness in the financial details of his household, do not evidence littleness of mind, but the lessons of honesty, economy, forethought learnt in his earliest youth, and instinctively applied under all circumstances, important or otherwise. Nothing came within his reach which was not instantly gauged by the solid principles of rectitude and method which guided him.

The Emperor would admit of no compromise in respect of questions of integrity. Whether it were under the Directory or the Empire, it made no difference; he was merciless to swindlers. In this particular he drew no distinction between his private means and public property.

Whether he governed as General in the name of the Republic, or in his own name as Consul

and Emperor, he showed the same antipathy to the perpetration of abuses, he displayed the same determination to punish their perpetrators. The unity of his character is absolute, whether displayed in the vast theatre maintained by the finances of the State, or on the little stage limited by the family income.

As early as 1796, immediately on joining the Army of Italy, he ordered the arrest of a contractor who had been guilty of fraud in the matter of the soldiers' rations, and he exclaimed :

'It is important that no dishonest man should escape. For a long time already the army and the interests of the country have been the prey of cupidity.'¹

The sight of abuses is intolerable to him. He vehemently demanded from the Directory increased powers to punish them in an exemplary manner.

'The accounts of the army are in shocking disorder. Everything is sold. The army consumes five times as much as is necessary, because the contractors make false returns. The principal actresses in Italy are supported by persons connected with the French army. I arrest these persons every day, but the laws do not confer sufficient authority upon the General to enable

¹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. i., p. 127, No. 125 April 7, 1796.

him to strike salutary terror into this army of swindlers.²

Later on, both as Consul and as Emperor, his inflexible uprightness displays itself upon all occasions. No matter the rank of the defrauder, he is punished with the same inexorability.

‘I desire you to order that the utmost severity should rule in your offices,’³ he writes to Berthier concerning some Generals who had made use of their position to claim sums not due to them.

In the case of Solignac he gave the following order :

‘Send for Solignac. I will have restitution to the uttermost farthing. If he does not repay 6,000,000 francs (£240,000), he shall be condemned to penalties which will render him infamous.’⁴

Another General, Kellermann, who had speculated in national property, was treated with no less rigour :

‘It was not to carry out operations of this nature that I sent Generals into Spain, but to conquer and subdue the country. It is contrary to all rules that the men charged with administra-

² ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. ii., p. 228, No. 1,363, January 6, 1797.

³ *Ibid.*, t. vii., p. 25, No. 5,370, February 13, 1801.

⁴ *Ibid.*, t. xii., p. 177, No. 9,958, March 12, 1806.

tion and authority should abuse their position and have any dealings with such proceedings. These purchases are to be declared null and void. Inform General Kellermann of my very great displeasure at his improper conduct.⁵

Neither were the Dukes of Padua and of Castiglione spared :

‘They are to take nothing, and to restore the money they have received.’⁶

Nobody escaped his incessant vigilance, civil functionaries of all ranks, contractors of all classes. Some bankers sold corn at twenty francs instead of ten francs the quintal : ‘We should be ruined,’ he says, and gives orders to stop the purchases.

He busies himself about the lease of the ‘Barrière de Saint Cannat, fixed at 25,000 francs, instead of 43,000, as it had been the year before.’ Napoleon, scenting a fraud, orders a report to be made to him on the subject.

Are shoes of bad quality supplied, which in his opinion are ‘not worth thirty sous’? He demands the punishment of the guilty with as much eagerness as he demanded that of Ouvrard, who was accused of having extorted 90,000,000 francs (£360,000) from the Treasury. When he gained

⁵ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxi., p. 379, No. 17,311, February 2, 1811.

⁶ *Ibid.*, t. xxv., p. 392, No. 20,138, June 12, 1813.

his object, in this latter case, he announced it to his brother Joseph with as much triumph as though he had won a victory :

‘ Thank God, I am repaid. All the same, it has given me a great deal of trouble. I only tell you about it to show you what scoundrels there are in the world. The misfortunes of France have always originated with these wretches.’⁷

He regarded the renewal of the licenses for the gambling-tables as pretexts for money presents (*prétextes à pots-de-vin*);⁸ he arrested some express messengers who did not pay for their horses at the posting-stations;⁹ the contractors for the lighting of Paris are, according to him, scoundrels, who imagine that they have lighted the streets of Paris properly after they have bribed the police.¹⁰

The *octroi* of Marseilles was extremely wasteful, and with regard to this Napoleon writes that it is ‘ not his intention to hand over a town like Marseilles to the cupidity of anyone, whoever he may be.’¹¹

‘ The saddles from Paris are badly made ; instead of being stuffed with equal quantities of

⁷ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xii., p. 40, No. 9,773, February 7, 1806.

⁸ *Ibid.*, t. xi., p. 490, No. 9,590, December 19, 1805.

⁹ *Ibid.*, t. xiii., p. 529, No. 11,249, November 13, 1806.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 260, No. 12,631, May 23, 1807.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 263, No. 12,637, May 24, 1807.

straw, flock and horsehair, they are stuffed only with straw and flock ; they have only put a little hair into the pads to make believe that it goes right through. Disallow the charges made by the contractor who has committed this fraud. I spend a great deal of money, and pay regularly, and I will have good value.'¹²

As we see, absolutely nothing escaped his notice. The dates, too, of the foregoing fragments prove that, wherever he might be, his vigilance was still awake.

It is from the middle of Austria that he directs the lighting up of Paris ! At the same time that he enlarged the field of his conquests, his hand was stretched out to keep constantly in touch with all branches of his administration, and his grasp closed convulsively on the least symptom of disintegration in his huge empire.

It is a very good thing to require honesty in others, but to be one's self the slave of one's integrity is better still. It is known that the famous 'Sancy' diamond and other crown jewels had passed into Spain at the Revolution.

When Napoleon became master of that country in 1808, he wrote :

'I have the right to take back these diamonds, but I will buy them back at a just price. Tell

¹² 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxii., p. 341, No. 17,941, July 23, 1811.

Laforest to arrange it with the proper authorities.¹³

Still more edifying is the story related by Meneval :¹⁴

‘On the hill of the Trocadero, the Emperor wished to build a palace for the King of Rome. A cottage occupied by a cooper stood on the spot destined for the officers of the palace. The chief steward received orders to buy it. The price asked was double its value ; but just as the deed of sale was about to be signed the proprietor demanded a much higher price than that agreed upon. The matter was referred to the Emperor, who ordered that he should be paid ; but as the owner’s demands increased in proportion to the facilities granted to him, the civil list at last refused to go any further.

“ ‘I desire,” said the Emperor, “that the house should remain where it is, as a monument of my respect for the rights of property.”

‘This house was still standing at the Restoration, when the owner was delighted to part with it for a few hundred francs.’

Somewhat similar to the above is the following story told by Captain Coignet.¹⁵ It occurred during the combats that preceded the surrender

¹³ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I,’ t. xvii., p. 226, No. 14,013, May 28, 1808.

¹⁴ ‘Souvenirs,’ t. i., p. 278.

¹⁵ ‘Cahiers,’ p. 167.

of Ulm. The soldiers, drenched by the persistent rain and by marching through water, made large fires in a village to dry themselves.

‘It unfortunately happened that a pretty little villa caught fire, and could not be saved.

‘The Emperor in his indignation exclaimed :

“You shall pay for it. I will give 6,000 francs (£240), and each of you shall give a day’s pay. Let it be immediately handed to the proprietor.”’

On his entry into Vienna in 1805, ‘the Emperor orders that the utmost respect shall be paid to property and to the inhabitants of this capital.’¹⁶

In addition to pecuniary or material probity, the Emperor possessed the other and rarer one, moral probity.

If Fouché may be trusted, out of the first eighteen Marshals created, six were more republican than monarchist — Jourdan, Masséna, Bernadotte, Ney, Brune and Augereau.¹⁷

Another contemporary, Miot de Mérito,¹⁸ says also that ‘Napoleon gave proof of the utmost sagacity in seeking out men of talent, whom he employed wherever he found them, even in the party hostile to his power.’

Wherever the Emperor discovered honesty he

¹⁶ ‘Bulletins de la Grande-Armée,’ t. i., p. 373, 23 Brumaire, year xiv.

¹⁷ ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 317. ¹⁸ ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 265.

honoured it. His respect for it was positive adoration, which showed itself very strongly when he gave the title of Duke of Dantzic to Marshal Lefebvre, who was the first to be ennobled, long before his companions-in-arms.

Lefebvre, a valiant soldier, was less celebrated than men like Ney, Lannes, Masséna or Davout. He had no distinction in his appearance which could impart lustre at the Court. On the contrary, he was without breeding and education, and excited laughter rather than admiration in society. His worldly inferiority was not made up for by the distinction of his wife, who may be described in one well-known anecdote :

The day she first appeared at the Tuileries, with her new title of Duchess, of which she was very proud, she scolded the usher a little for keeping her waiting in the anteroom. Just at that moment the Empress came in, and with a gracious smile said to her :

‘How is the Duchess of Dantzic?’

The lady, instead of answering, gave a sort of nod, and, turning hastily to the usher, who was shutting the door, said to him :

‘Hey, my boy, what do you say to that!’¹⁹
(*Hein, mon fils, ça te la coupe !*)

When Napoleon accorded to Lefebvre the exceptional honour of seeing his name inscribed

¹⁹ Duchesse d’Abrantès, ‘Mémoires,’ t. vii., p. 53.

at the head of the list of the Imperial nobility, he wished to give public testimony of his preference for a General whose loyalty and disinterestedness were irreproachable. Politics, his country's good afterwards dictated other choices to Napoleon, but his personal inclination was made clear when he signed first of all the promotion of the most upright man in his army.

It is useless to deny that this may easily be contradicted by bringing forward the ravages wrought by the wars of the Empire. Such obvious arguments, conclusive in appearance, are in reality but the resort of the hypercritical. We certainly have the right to blame a man for accepting the chief command of a belligerent army ; but when once that post has been assumed, we must not take the orders given to his troops as indications of the character of their chief. These orders are, generally speaking, rendered necessary by the resistance, the sudden attacks, or the bad faith of the enemy. Because, war bringing with it the necessity of reducing antagonistic forces by every possible means, of what consequence are goods and property in cases where the first thing at stake is human life ?

Fighting nations, in which class we may number all nations, have each in turn felt and inflicted the miseries inseparable from the scourge of war. Nevertheless, who would dream of esti-

mating the disposition of Saint Louis by the bloodshed and ravage of the Crusades, or of attacking the memory of Christopher Columbus on the ground of his want of respect for the rights of those harmless natives whose last thought, no doubt, was that of ruffling the peace of the continent ?

At the present day, a very modern euphuism, *colonial expansion*, serves to shield, in the eyes of Europe, expeditions which leave much to be desired on the score of sound morality, without anyone venturing, so far as we know, to draw psychological deductions from them relative to the private character of the pioneers of these conquests.

One must, then, in justice, eliminate from the discussion of Napoleon's nature the deeds of the warrior. These may be brought before a special tribunal which shall, if there is space for it, decide on the greater or less reprobation deserved by the Emperor in comparison with those of his predecessors and his contemporaries who were also great commanders.

VII.

The Religious Principles of the Middle Class—The Emperor's Tolerance—The Second Concordat—More Papal than the Pope—The Truth told by Pius VII.—Necessity for a Religion—Influence of Divine Right—Anxiety as to other Sovereigns' Opinion.

'THE Empress had thought of going to the Church of Sainte Geneviève. I fear such a proceeding may have a bad effect and produce no other result. Put a stop to all these devotions of Forty Hours, and these *Misereres*. If we had so many absurd ideas round us here, we should all be afraid of death. It was said long ago that priests and doctors render death painful.'¹

Such were, in the midst of the invasion of 1814, at the most critical moment for France of the whole campaign, the words of Napoleon to his brother Joseph, who was beside himself in Paris, and calling upon Heaven and all its angels to come to the help of the Imperial cause.

If side by side with these lines, which Voltaire

¹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxvii., p. 128, No. 21,205, February 7, 1814.

himself would not repudiate, we place the opening sentence of the will made at St. Helena, '1. I die in the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion, wherein I was born more than fifty years ago;' if we remember that Napoleon, while a Sub-lieutenant at Auxonne, presided over Louis's first Communion; if we picture to ourselves, as Meneval tells us, the Emperor 'making involuntary signs of the cross at the announcement of some great piece of good news, or some great danger,'² we shall obtain a combination of superficial scepticism and inborn faith which is much more likely to produce superstition than impiety.

At the beginning of the century that was the distinguishing mark of the religious feeling in the middle classes, saturated with the study of Voltaire and Rousseau. It was the fashion then to be bold enough to neglect God, but the courage to deny Him was wanting. Thus, in this matter also, religion, we find the principles in which he had been reared reappearing in him, and with equal intensity, moreover.

Though indifferent for himself to the practices of religion, he thought it quite natural that others should follow them, and professed the most liberal ideas on the subject.

'He would not admit,' says Metternich,³ 'that

² 'Souvenirs,' t. iii., p. 44.

³ 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 281.

a *bonâ-fide* atheist ever existed. Indifferent, personally, to religious rites, he respected them too much ever to level a joke at any who attended them.'

His respect for the beliefs of others attained extreme limits when, in 1812, at Moscow, he charged the popes to alter nothing in their orthodox liturgy, and to read the prayers for the Czar. And during the French occupation the *Te Deum* was sung, as usual, on the anniversary of the Czar's coronation.⁴

To many pious souls, the celebrated exclamation, 'Comediantes!' attributed to Pius VII., while captive of the Emperor at Fontainebleau, stands in place of every definition of Napoleon's religious character. This apostrophe dates from the discussions which took place in 1813 upon the Second Concordat. With all respect to the Holy Father, we think we may venture to interpret what was passing in his mind.

To see a man warmly defend the interests of a religion of which he makes no personal use; to hear him affirm that his only desire is to assure the safety and durability of the Church; to have imagined this man irreligious, and find him more papist than the Pope, was indeed a spectacle calculated to disconcert the Sovereign Pontiff.

'Comediantes' would have been a proper

⁴ Baron Fain, 'Manuscrit de 1812,' t. ii., p. 132.

expression had the Emperor only obeyed a desire to parade pretended devotion before the eyes of his august interlocutor. But it was not so ; Napoleon was the loyal and convinced advocate of the Catholic cause in France. He himself considered the establishment of the relations between Church and State by solid legislation a matter of the utmost importance. It was on this point that the furious quarrels broke out at Fontainebleau. The free exercise of the Catholic religion, sheltered hitherto behind the impregnable rampart known as the Concordat, is a proof that Napoleon, in 1801, had accomplished a strong, if not imperishable, Christian work, which had raised as many objections on the part of the Pope as the proposal of 1813.

What would have been the consequences to the Church had this Second Concordat been executed ? Would not the constant struggles between the clergy and the State, which we still witness, have been avoided ? We may repeat the last sentence of the Concordat of 1813, and say that 'the Church is in want of a powerful protection for the many needs of religion in our time.'⁵

This declaration is signed by the Pope and the Emperor. To deny the sincerity of the latter is to bring against him an accusation of a tendency against which we have an excellent defence,

⁵ *Moniteur de l'Empire Français*, February 14, 1813.

emanating from Pius VII. himself, who said, after the fall of the Empire :

‘We must remember that to Napoleon principally, after God, we owe the re-establishment of religion in the great kingdom of France.’⁶

The truth is to be found in this last sentence, and not in the ‘Comediante,’ for throughout his reign Napoleon displayed a constant and sincere desire to honour the Catholic religion. He was absolutely convinced of the imperious need for a religion which should be effective and regularly practised in France. His first act as Consul was to restore religion, despite the obstacles opposed to him, and which arose, in great measure, from the Generals of highest reputation. Monsieur de Ségur says :

‘They loudly criticized and blamed everything, especially the Concordat.’⁷

‘I found it more difficult to restore religion,’ says the Emperor himself, ‘than to gain battles.’⁸

Thibaudeau⁹ justifies this remark in the following terms :

‘The thing that most annoyed the people, whose duty brought them to Court, was the Mass that preceded the audience. The First Consul

⁶ ‘Dictionnaire Larousse.’ See ‘Concordat.’

⁷ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 152.

⁸ Duke of Vicenza, ‘Souvenirs,’ part ii., t. i., p. 37.

⁹ ‘Mémoires sur le Consulat,’ p. 14.

could not pretend not to be aware of this repugnance on the part of a great portion of his Court, nor could he be ignorant of the jokes and sarcasms that were made out loud upon the same subject.'

In default of orthodox convictions, his good sense served him as an infallible guide. Atheism, from his point of view, 'was a principle destructive of every social organization, which deprived man of all his hopes and all his consolations.'¹⁰

Long before the date of this letter, he had expressed the same opinion.

'There is but one means of getting good manners,' he said to Roederer, 'and that is by establishing religion. Society cannot exist without inequality of fortunes, and inequality of fortunes cannot exist without religion. When a man is dying of hunger by the side of one who gormandizes, it is impossible for him to agree to this difference, unless there be some authority to say to him : " God wills it so ; there must be poor and rich in this world ; but afterwards, and during eternity, the division will be made otherwise."'¹¹

Following out the same train of thought Napoleon once said to the Council of State :

'A man does not have himself killed for a few halfpence a day, or for a paltry distinction ; you

¹⁰ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xi., p. 472, No. 9,562, December 13, 1805.

¹¹ Roederer, 'Mémoires,' t. iii., p. 335.

must speak to the soul in order to electrify the man.'¹²

No one understood better than Napoleon the influence of mystical suggestions upon the minds of the people. How strongly he felt the power of the legitimate rights upon which the former Kings relied is confirmed by Metternich, to whom he often spoke of it at the time of his marriage with the Austrian Archduchess :

‘One of Napoleon’s keenest and most constant regrets,’ says the Ambassador,¹³ ‘was that he could not invoke the rights of legitimacy as the basis of his power. Few men have felt more deeply than he how precarious and fragile authority is when deprived of this foundation, and what an opening it gives for attack.’

We may say that he attached to the doctrine of Divine right an importance which was almost simple : witness this exclamation that escaped him in 1815 :

‘The Pope is actually resisting the Bourbons as he resisted me !’¹⁴

Dazzled by the superiority that he admitted the Princes of the blood-royal to possess, he at last came to think of them as made of a peculiar material.

¹² Thibaudeau, ‘Mémoires sur le Consulat,’ p. 423.

¹³ ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 283.

¹⁴ Jung, ‘Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte,’ t. iii., p. 237.

Writing about the Czar to his Ambassador in Russia, he says :

‘It is interesting to me to observe this man born a King.’¹⁵

The Emperor, who never lost sight of his obscure origin, regarded himself and his own family from the point of view of these hereditary Kings.

One day, as he was writing to the King of Prussia, he said to his secretary :

‘We must mind the style of our letters. In the King of Prussia’s cabinet there are men who can both speak and write French well.’¹⁶

In connection with the freak of the King of Holland in 1810, we know that he said :

‘The family must display much wisdom and good conduct. All this will not give Europe a good opinion of it.’¹⁷

As almost always happens to a man who finds himself in the society of people to whom he considers himself inferior, Napoleon showed himself susceptible and punctilious respecting the manner in which he was treated.

‘The Emperor,’ says Prince Metternich,¹⁸ ‘complained that the Emperor and Empress of

¹⁵ Duke of Vicenza, ‘Souvenirs,’ t. i., p. 48.

¹⁶ Meneval, ‘Souvenirs,’ t. iii., p. 82.

¹⁷ Letter from Napoleon to his brother Jérôme.

¹⁸ ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 210.

Austria never asked after him. "Never do I receive any attention from you!" he exclaimed.'

Finally, at Fontainebleau, in 1814, in presence of his disgraceful abandonment by all his Marshals, we shall be astonished to find Napoleon, overwhelmed as he was with the most anxious and pressing cares, still considering the opinions of Kings :

'What will the Kings say now,' he asked, 'to this termination of my reign?'¹⁹

If the *bourgeois* side of Napoleon's character had not been made abundantly clear to us during this study, we should have found a startling revelation of it in his relations with Sovereigns who were 'born Kings,' as he used to say—the only people in whose presence he tried to put a restraint upon himself, the only people whose criticism of his private life he dreaded.

¹⁹ Duke of Vicenza, 'Souvenirs,' t. ii., p. 111.

VIII.

Little Middle-class Ways—The Emperor's Indiscretion—
Marriages at Court—His Demeanour to Women—
Amiable Trifles—Public Morality.

THE narrowness of mind in the minor actions of life is not the only narrowness to be met with in this man whose thoughts were bold and deep. Whether through indifference or inaptitude, the science of good manners always remained a sealed book to him in his private life. Following his natural impulses, without troubling himself about decorum or what people would say, to be and to seem to be were with him one and the same thing, once, be it understood, he was free from the slavery of public duties, which he always respected.

When he was improving his property at Malmaison, the Duchesse d'Abrantès¹ tells us that 'the First Consul was so delighted with the work that he insisted upon taking us thither, so

¹ 'Mémoires,' t. iv., p. 364.

that Madame Bonaparte should see the Pavillon du Butard, which he intended to turn into a hunting lodge.'

'At Elba,' says Chateaubriand,² 'he was to be seen looking after his builders at five o'clock in the morning.'

When, in 1815, Father Maurice of Brescia was sent to the Tuileries by Lucien Bonaparte, 'the Emperor condescended to show him both the public and private apartments.'³

The most important act in Napoleon's foreign policy was the Continental blockade. The prohibition of colonial produce was a great hindrance to the sugar trade, and, by order, great attention was paid to perfecting by all available methods the manufacture of beetroot sugar.

This question interested the Emperor in the highest degree. As soon as the French products could enter into competition with foreign ones, his delight was such 'that he placed under a glass on his chimney-piece a bit of refined beetroot sugar that could vie with the finest colonial sugar from the refineries of Orleans.'⁴

Fleury de Chaboulon⁵ regards him as 'incapable of keeping a secret.' To this we would draw

² 'Mémoires d'Outre-tombe,' t. iii., p. 303.

³ Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien,' t. iii., p. 238.

⁴ Fouché, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 70.

⁵ 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 16.

the attention of those who say that Napoleon was a monster of dissimulation.

The Duchesse d'Abrantès also complains of the indiscretion of the Emperor, who used 'always to tell wives of their husbands' infidelities.'⁶

'As to the other jokes upon the pretty women of Ghent,' writes Davoût to his wife, 'I am sorry that the Emperor made them to you, as I fear it may have made you uneasy.'⁷

It is a curious fact that the man who could watch unmoved the chances of a battle which might terminate in a disaster, could not endure the smallest bad fortune when he was playing cards. If luck were against him, though no money was at stake, he invariably cheated. All his contemporaries are unanimous in stating this blot upon his character. One of them declares :

'Even at chess he always managed to regain possession of his two bishops. He did not like anyone to remark upon it seriously, and was always the first to laugh at it himself, but he was clearly annoyed if too much stress were laid upon it, and, after all, as he never played for money, there was more reason to laugh than to be annoyed at it.'⁸

⁶ Duchesse d'Abrantès, 'Mémoires,' t. vi., p. 7.

⁷ 'Correspondance du Maréchal Davoût : Années de Commandement,' p. 73.

⁸ Duchesse d'Abrantès, 'Mémoires,' t. iv., p. 373.

Every well-regulated *bourgeois* has a passion for match-making. From a letter of the period we extract a passage which ironically emphasizes this little mania of the Emperor's.

'I hope,' writes Boucher de Perthes to the Comtesse de N., 'that if you become a widow the Emperor will give me your hand by an Order in Council. His Majesty loves marriages, especially those from which a large number of children spring. Therefore, my lady baronesses, countesses, and duchesses, if you wish to be agreeable to the Emperor,

'Faites tous vos efforts
Pour réparer les dégâts de la guerre.
Tuer un homme est un crime. Dès lors
La bonne œuvre est dans le contraire.'⁹

We have already mentioned the pressure brought to bear by the Emperor on Berthier; Gaudin, Minister of Finance, also had to suffer from this mania for marrying people whether they would or no.

'I hope,' says Napoleon to Gaudin, in making him Duke of Gaëta, 'that you will not refuse to take a wife within two years at most. If you like, I will undertake to arrange it for you.'¹⁰

An extract from a letter of one of the Marshals will show how well Napoleon discharged this responsibility.

⁹ Boucher de Perthes, 'Sous Dix Rois,' t. ii., p. 565.

¹⁰ Duke of Gaëta, 'Mémoires,' Appendix, p. 160.

‘I am overwhelmed with the favours of the Emperor,’ writes Davoût to his wife; ‘but the one I value most is the woman to whom he has joined my lot.’¹¹

Napoleon’s attitude towards women has often been called brutal. With the exception of his speech to Madame de Staël already narrated, with the exception of the disappointment at Tilsit of the beautiful Queen Louisa of Prussia, that Venus of diplomacy, who offered a flower for which she asked a price (the cession of Magdeburg) that the Emperor thought too high—with the exception, we say, of these two episodes, we know of no precise facts that would justify us in accepting the conclusions of his detractors.

It would be nearer the truth, we fancy, to say that the Emperor, always considering the most serious matters, gave but little attention to the fair sex, and had not time to make pretty speeches. Nevertheless, he could now and then say nice things to them, as is proved by the somewhat startling speech made to Madame Lalande, wife of the astronomer:

*‘Partager une nuit entre une jolie femme et un beau ciel, me paraît être le bonheur sur la terre.’*¹²

¹¹ ‘Correspondance du Maréchal Davoût: Années de Jeunesse,’ p. 109.

¹² ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. ii., p. 138, No. 1,231, December 5, 1796.

Madame de Metternich repeats this compliment to her husband :

‘At the last reception I played cards with the Emperor. He began by praising my diamonds and my everlasting gold gown.’¹³

Girardin tells us¹⁴ that he had been present at a supper after which ‘the Emperor said something pretty to each of the women present. Under such circumstances his smile is charming.’

Those were exceptions, no doubt, for neither by temperament nor by ideas was he prone to paying pretty compliments. He cared nothing for women’s conversation, and had no hesitation in saying that he always detested women who were supposed to be clever.¹⁵

‘They should look after their children and households without troubling themselves about things that do not concern them.’¹⁶ That was his view of wifely duties.

As to permitting them any interference in political matters, he refused it energetically, in these terms reported by Roederer :¹⁷

‘Women had far better work with their needles than with their tongues, especially if they are

¹³ Prince Metternich, ‘*Mémoires*,’ t. i., p. 315.

¹⁴ ‘*Journal et Souvenirs*,’ t. ii., p. 352.

¹⁵ Jung, ‘*Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte*,’ t. ii., p. 239.

¹⁶ Duke of Vicenza, ‘*Souvenirs*,’ part ii., t. ii., p. 356.

¹⁷ ‘*Mémoires*,’ t. iii., p. 366.

going to mix in politics. A State is lost when a woman manages its public affairs. France perished through a Queen. Look at Spain : the Queen governs there. For my part, if my wife wishes a thing it is a reason for me to do the contrary.'¹⁸

'The papers discovered at Charlottenburg,' says the Twenty-Ninth Bulletin of the Grand Army, 'would prove, were proof necessary, how unhappy are princes who allow women any influence in political matters.'¹⁹

What trust could he put in women when he had no belief in their primary virtue, which should be fidelity? Married twice over, he was each time tried, like Molière's husbands, in spite of all his precautions, which extended even to the length of forbidding any man to enter the Empress's apartments.²⁰

The quintessence of Napoleon's scepticism as to virtue in married life was thus deliberately expressed by him during a discussion at a State Council : 'Breaking the seventh commandment is no phenomenon. It is so general as to be quite an everyday affair.'

In spite of his opinions upon the depravity of

¹⁸ This has reference to Joséphine.

¹⁹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xiii., p. 425, No. 11,097, October 27, 1806.

²⁰ Mdle. Avrillon, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 115.

the times, he would allow no irregularity in his own surroundings. He distinctly refused Madame Visconti permission to appear at Court, because of her intimacy with Berthier. The entreaties of the latter, his old friend, could never overcome the Emperor's resistance. He ostracized in the same manner Madame Grandt, Talleyrand's mistress. She is remembered by the poem 'La Pucelle' rather than by any other title.

Opposed as he was to anything that could shock public morality, he heard with indignation of the proposal to erect a statue to Agnes Sorel :

'Ask the Prefect of Tours,' he wrote to the Minister of the Interior, 'what is the meaning of this proposed statue to Agnes Sorel. It seems to me quite improper. If my memory serves me, she was a King's mistress. Write and tell the Perfect that I will have no statue to her.'²¹

²¹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xvi., p. 63, No. 13,207, October 2, 1807.

IX.

Artistic Tastes—Patronage of Art—Literary Preferences—
 Epic Poems—Tragedy—Music—Painting—Predilection
 for Defined Styles—His own Style—Proclamations and
 Letters—Military Eloquence—Metaphors—Not a French-
 man !

THE pupil who, at school, never received good marks for anything but mathematics ; the warrior whose life was spent in moving masses of men, for whose material comfort he had to provide ; the administrator, cutting down his budgets, and placing the question of money in the forefront of his cares, was less likely to be taken captive by the ideal and often indeterminate charms of art, than by precise and well-thought-out calculations which would produce an immediate result.

Nevertheless, as head of the State, depositary of its national glory, he regarded himself, rightly or wrongly, as personally responsible for the position of the Fine Arts during his reign, and did all in his power to preserve to France the artistic supremacy she had gained over the world.

The programme of his government might be

summed up in two words : the glory and the wealth of his country ; and although to procure the one he actively superintended every detail of administration, he would not allow the other to be neglected.

We have seen him giving orders to the manufacturers of Lyons and Paris, lending money to Oberkampf and Richard Lenoir ; we shall see him ordering what plays were to be acted, the subjects for pictures to be painted, and distributing help and pensions to literary men, painters, musicians and actors.

If a particular branch of art needs help, he writes to the Minister responsible, and says, for example :

‘ Literature needs encouragement. You are Minister. Propose to me some means for giving a helping hand to all the different branches of literature which have always been the glory of the nation.’¹

In his impatience to have renowned poets, the Emperor, who knew no obstacles, would create a celebrity by ministerial decision.

‘ There are a few men of letters,’ he writes to the Minister of the Interior, ‘ who have shown talents for poetry. I could name ten or twelve. The difficulty is that at the present time no

¹ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xiv., p. 68, No. 11,445, December 12, 1806.

opinion is formed in favour of men who work successfully. That is where a Minister can interfere with advantage. A young man who writes a praiseworthy ode, and who is distinguished by a Minister, emerges from obscurity, the public watch him, and it is for him to do the rest.²

His more or less enlightened interference in matters of Art displays itself very strongly in his letter from Berlin to Cambacérès :³

‘ Though the army is doing all in its power to honour the nation, Literature is doing her utmost to dishonour it. I have read the wretched verses that were sung at the opera. They are ridiculous. It is absurd to order a poet to write an eclogue as you would order a dressmaker to make a muslin gown.’

And, again, to Champagny, on the same subject, he says :

‘ Do they wish to degrade literature in France, and since when have they taken to doing at the Opera what they may do at the Vaudeville—sing impromptu songs ?’

Perhaps in this particular the Emperor’s criticism was not without value, for poetry was the only artistic or literary taste really developed in him, and then only for epic or heroic poems.

² ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xiv., p. 407, No. 11,970, March 7, 1807.

³ *Ibid.*, t. xiii., p. 560, No. 11,287, November 21, 1806.

From his early youth, Ossian had always been his favourite poet, and it may be remembered that in one of his first letters to Joséphine he speaks of 'our good Ossian.'

It seems scarcely probable that, when his imagination was first kindled by reading the poems which celebrated the sufferings and the brave deeds of the Gaelic heroes, the young Bonaparte should have seen his own future destiny revealed in them.

But what a gloomy prophecy the Emperor must have retrospectively recognized if, during his exile at St. Helena, he remembered the passage describing the combat between Fingal and the Phantom of Loda!

Besides Ossian, his literary preferences were exclusively for tragedy. It was his favourite form of theatrical writing, and he placed Corneille above all other writers.

When a proposal was made to grant a pension of 300 francs (£12) to the descendants of the author of the 'Cid,' Napoleon answered :

'It would be unworthy the acceptance of a man of whom we should make a king. My intention is to make the eldest member of the family a Baron, with a pension of 10,000 francs (£400); I shall also give a barony to the head of the other branch, with a pension of 4,000 francs (£160) if they be not brothers. As for the

daughters, let me know their ages, and I will grant them such a pension as will enable them to live.’⁴

It has been said, and with truth, that, on his arrival in Paris, in 1794, Napoleon had made friends with Talma; it has also been said, but with less proof, that the future Emperor used to accept free passes to the theatre to go and applaud the great actor. No doubt it was from following performances of tragedies with such assiduity that Napoleon was enabled to make this original remark :

‘In a tragedy, at the beginning of the play, the actors are in a fright; by the third act they are in a perspiration, and by the fifth they are in a sweat.’⁵

Whether from a recollection of their old friendship, or out of gratitude for the free tickets, Napoleon was not ungrateful to Talma, to whom he granted by Imperial decree ‘a present of 6,000 francs (£240), and a monthly pension of 2,000 francs (£80).’⁶

Napoleon affected to understand the rules of tragedy perfectly. When he was in the depths of Poland, in 1806, he suddenly conceived the curious

⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxv., p. 120, No. 19,756, March 24, 1813.

⁵ Roederer, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 547.

⁶ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xii., p. 402, No. 10,275, May 26, 1806.

idea of reviewing Raynouard's 'Templiers'; he says :

'The nature of things is the only motive power that may be used in tragedy ; it is politics that lead to catastrophes without any real crime, and Monsieur Raynouard has missed that point in his play. Had he followed that principle, Philip le Bel might have been a fine character ; we should have pitied him and understood that he could not do otherwise. Nothing proves how little real knowledge authors possess of the springs and motives of tragedy than the criminal proceedings that they set before us on the stage.'

And he concludes his letter with this reasonable remark :

'It would take time to develop this idea, and you know I have other things to think about.'⁷

This last sentence is in absolute conformity with a remark made by him one day to Roederer :

'I love a tragedy ; but were all the tragedies in the world on one side of me, and an account of the military situation on the other, I would not even look at the former.'⁸

It is clear that he has no passion, properly so called, for these works, although he loved

⁷ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xiv., p. 127, No. 11,529, to Fouché, December 31, 1806.

⁸ Roederer, 'Mémoires,' t. iii., p. 532.

them, for he did not disdain when an opportunity arose to suggest the basis for a play.

'You ought,' he said to Goethe, 'to write a play upon the death of Cæsar, but in a much worthier and grander manner than Voltaire. In such a tragedy you should show the world how Cæsar would have made the happiness of humanity had time been allowed him to execute his vast schemes.'⁹

'Why,' he writes to Fouché, 'should you not ask Monsieur Raynouard to write a tragedy upon the transition from the first to the second race? Instead of being a tyrant, the successor should be the saviour of the nation.'¹⁰

Undoubtedly the representation of Cæsar, and of the creator of a new dynasty, as national benefactors, was not calculated to damage the Imperial rule in the mind of the public; so much is evident, and the calculation is obvious; but, nevertheless, it shows that both by education and instinct Napoleon possessed some knowledge of the art of tragedy. Moreover, Arnault, in his dedication of the 'Venetians,' a tragedy performed in 1799, acknowledges that Napoleon had suggested to him the idea of the fifth act, which was the most successful one in the play.¹¹

⁹ S. Sklower, 'Entrevue de Napoléon avec Goethe,' p. 68.

¹⁰ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. x., p. 467, No. 8,821, June 1, 1805.

¹¹ Sainte-Beuve, 'Causeries du Lundi,' t. vii., p. 505.

Napoleon was thoroughly well versed in the classical repertory. At one of the most pathetic moments of his career, in 1814, when he thought that his son might be taken from him, he said :

‘I have never witnessed a performance of “Andromaque” without pitying the lot of Astyanax, and I have always considered it a blessing for him that he did not survive his father.’¹²

When he occupied himself with matters theatrical, he did it in the most detailed manner. He made himself manager of the theatres that received assistance from public funds. He wrote :

‘I will not have “La Vestale” played. I think it would be better to give the “Death of Adam,” as it is ready.’¹³

‘The “Death of Abel” must be given on March 20; the ballet of “Perseus and Andromeda” on Easter Monday, the “Bayadères” a fortnight later, “Sophocles” and “Armida” during the summer, the “Danaïdes” during the autumn, the “Sabines” at the end of May.’¹⁴

If everything does not go according to his wishes, he exclaims :

‘If things do not go better at the Opera, I will

¹² ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxvii., p. 123, to King Joseph, February 8, 1814.

¹³ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 543, No. 13,068, August 25, 1807.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, t. xx., p. 252, No. 16,305, March 2, 1810.

put a good soldier to manage them who will wake them up.'¹⁵

These notes upon the Emperor's artistic cares, as far as theatricals were concerned, would be incomplete without a mention of the rewards that he gave to merit wherever he found it. Every celebrity, from Talma to Grétry, Méhul, Lesueur, Raynouard, Lebrun—all these were pensionaries of the Imperial bounty, one receiving 4,000 francs (£160), another 10,000 (£400), another, like Lesueur, author of 'Les Bardes,' 12,000 (£480).

He knew little about music; although, in 1797, he declared that, 'of all the Fine Arts, music is the one that has most influence upon the feelings, the one that a legislator should most encourage,'¹⁶ he had but very elementary ideas upon the subject.

On June 23, 1805, we find him inquiring 'what sort of a piece is this "Don Giovanni" that they propose to give at the opera?'¹⁷

When, on October 4 of the same year, he heard that work at the Court Theatre at Stuttgart, his enthusiasm was only moderate.

'I heard the German opera, "Don Giovanni," yesterday; the music seems to me very good.'¹⁸

¹⁵ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xv., p. 177, No. 12,509, May 2, 1807.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 200, No. 2,042, July 26, 1797.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, t. x., p. 557, No. 8,940, to Fouché, June 23, 1805.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, t. xi., p. 285, No. 9,329, to Prince Joseph, October 4, 1805.

Only one vocalist, Crescentini, whom he heard at Vienna in 1806, in Zingarelli's 'Romeo and Juliet,' succeeded in arousing his enthusiasm. Napoleon brought him to Paris with a salary of 50,000 francs (£2,000) and extras. This singer never performed in France except at the Court Theatre, and in his delight on one occasion, Napoleon gave him the order of the Iron Crown, to the great annoyance of the Generals, says Mdlle. Avrillon.¹⁹

Small concerts of chamber-music, however, did not displease the Emperor, who, writing from Posen to Joséphine, says :

'Paër, the famous musician, his wife, a singer whom you heard at Milan twelve years ago, and Brizzi, are here. They give me a little music every evening.'²⁰

Napoleon had acknowledged his ignorance of painting, when he asked the Directory to appoint a commission to choose the pictures of highest value from among those which he, as Commander-in-Chief, had brought back from Italy.

Throughout his reign, when the Emperor ordered pictures, he did it with the detailed attention he gave to everything. He thus ordered :

¹⁹ 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 90.

²⁰ 'Letters of Napoleon to Joséphine,' t. i., p. 222, No. lxxvii., December 12, 1806.

‘Eight pictures of three mètres three décimètres in height and four mètres in breadth, the price of each picture to be 12,000 francs (£480).

‘Four others of one mètre eight décimètres by two mètres two décimètres, at a price of 6,000 francs (£240) apiece.

‘One of two mètres two décimètres by three mètres, at a price of 8,000 francs (£320).’²¹

It will be noticed that the price of these pictures was fixed according to the size of the canvases, and not according to the workmanship.

In one of the few criticisms—perhaps the only one—he ever made upon pictures, he did not spare one of the greatest masters of the period :

‘I have just seen the portrait David has painted of me. It is so bad, and so full of defects, that I will not have it, nor will I send it to any town, especially to Italy, where it would give them a very bad opinion of our school.’²²

In art, as Napoleon said when talking to Goethe at Erfurt, he liked ‘a decided style.’²³ We can discover this prejudice in all the productions of his reign.

²¹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xii., p. 124, No. 9,915, March 3, 1806.

²² *Ibid.*, t. xii., p. 504, No. 10,432, to Monsieur Daru, July 2, 1806.

²³ Sklower, ‘Entrevue de Napoléon avec Goethe,’ p. 99.

This desire for 'a decided style' is to be traced throughout the First Empire, in literature, in dramatic writings, in painting and sculpture, in architecture, clothing and furniture.

Everywhere an effort, often an awkward one, is visible to escape from the commonplace. Each work, like each object of the Empire, bears the impress of the one will that, from above, weighed upon all the artists and workmen of the period.

Comparing Napoleon's style with that of Pascal, Sainte-Beuve says :

'There was geometry in both of them ; each man's words were measured, as it were, with compasses.'²⁴

No description could be more exact with respect to Napoleon, if by that the author meant that each of his speeches was startling in its appropriateness, not only to the circumstances under which it was delivered, but to the intelligence of those who heard it.

Although most of his proclamations are still considered models of military eloquence, we must not suppose that, in preparing them, he simply followed his ordinary mode of address. His style, when he was not anxious about it, was rather trivial than grand. Being always in a hurry, pulled in all directions by different matters, he dictated just as the words came into his head :

²⁴ 'Causeries du Lundi,' t. i., p. 182.

the first word he chanced upon suited him, whether it were vulgar or even coarse ; it was written down without reserve, without any thought of appearances.

And we may observe this was not merely the affectation of a Sovereign, certain that no one would criticise him, for we find the same freedom of language in the General when writing to his superiors.

‘ See that the Commissioners whom you are sending to Italy do not consider themselves a peripatetic Directory,’ he writes to the Directory.²⁵

To the Minister for Foreign Affairs : ‘ These things may be said in a café, but not to the Government.’²⁶

The Emperor of Austria is ‘ that skeleton Francis II., who was placed on his throne by the merits of his ancestors.’²⁷

Of another King he writes :

‘ That arch-fool the King of Sweden has taken advantage of his opportunity to denounce the armistice. It is a great pity that one cannot send a fellow like that to an asylum.’²⁸

²⁵ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. i., p. 452, No. 715, July 2, 1796.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 379, No. 2,292, October 7, 1797.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, t. xi., p. 84, No. 9,070, to Talleyrand, August 13, 1805.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 406, No. 12,890, to Fouché, July 10, 1807.

He reproaches his brother Louis, King of Holland, with having 'the petty ideas, the feeble sentiments and the wretched notions of economy of an Amsterdam shopkeeper,'²⁹ and does not scruple to tell him on another occasion : 'You want the Queen your wife to be like a nurse, always occupied in washing her child. If you had married a flirt she would have led you about by the nose.'³⁰

It would be impossible to show less respect than he does for the dignitaries of the Church. The Pope is 'an old fox'; some cardinals' letters are published in the newspapers by his orders, 'to convince all Italy of the absurd maunderings of these old cardinals.'³¹ As for the Bishop of Verona : 'If I catch him I will punish him in an exemplary manner.'³²

In the same spirit he said of Sièyes that he ought to 'burn a wax-candle at Notre Dame for his good luck in getting away.'³³

Admiral Villeneuve is 'a wretch who should be drummed out of the service . . . he would sacrifice everything to save his own skin.'³⁴

²⁹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xiv., p. 28, No. 11,379, December 3, 1806.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 25, No. 12,294, April 4, 1807.

³¹ *Ibid.*, t. ii., p. 260, No. 1,402, January 24, 1807.

³² *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 21, No. 1,766, May 3, 1797.

³³ *Ibid.*, t. vii., p. 357, No. 5,922, January 13, 1802.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, t. xi., p. 177, No. 9,179, September 4, 1807.

The word 'fool' frequently drops from his pen : 'fools of sailors,' 'a fool of a commissioner,' 'an office manned by fools,' and even, 'How foolish the officers were to steal the couriers' despatches!'

Gossips and journalists were not in favour with him. He hated the 'mannikins and the dandies who talk of what goes on in the army.'³⁵

'I regard it as a calamity,' he says elsewhere, 'when I see a number of scoundrels, without brains or talent, perpetually striking out right and left against respectable people.'³⁶

To Marshal Lefebvre he one day gave this plain-spoken piece of advice :

'Kick all these contemptible chatterboxes out of your house.'³⁷

In order to strike public imagination, he does not scruple to express himself deliberately in the plainest terms, which are sometimes surprising ; for instance, the following passage is taken from his account of the campaign of 1805 :

'The House of Austria would find it impossible to borrow 100,000 francs (£4,000). The very Generals themselves have not seen a piece of gold for many years.'³⁸

³⁵ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xiv., p. 203, No. 11,645, January 16, 1807.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 20, No. 12,285, April 4, 1807.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 241, No. 12,600, May 18, 1807.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, t. xi., p. 351, No. 9,416, 10th bulletin of the Grand Army, October 22, 1805.

This declaration, however, does not prevent him from stating that in one town Murat had discovered 'a treasure of 200,000 florins (£24,000).'³⁹

How amusing is 'this sergeant-major, come from Moscow, who is questioned by all the world! There are twenty-four lines of answers made by this unfortunate creature, "of some intelligence," says the report. One sees there the Austrians who "have lost all their battles, and do nothing but cry."' ⁴⁰

He uses a curious simile to expose the rapacity of the Russians :

'A rich man who lives in a palace cannot hope to satisfy these savage hordes by his wealth; they strip him, and leave him lying naked by his gilded wainscots.'⁴¹

When he wants to flatter the patriotism of his soldiers, or to arouse in them ideas of valour and military heroism, his proclamations reach the very heights of eloquence.

'They wished to compel me to place upon the head of our most cruel enemies this iron crown, won by the blood of so many Frenchmen,' he says after the battle of Austerlitz. 'On the very

³⁹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xi., p. 358, No. 9,430, 11th bulletin of the Grand Army, October 26, 1805.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, t. xi., p. 368, No. 9,443, October 31, 1805.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, t. xi., p. 421, No. 9,582, 25th bulletin of the Grand Army, November 16, 1805.

anniversary of the coronation of your Emperor you destroyed and annihilated these rash and insensate proposals! You taught them that it is easier to brave and defy than to conquer us.'

His speech ends with this sublime inspiration, or imitation of Shakespeare :

'Soldiers, my people will greet you with joy, and it will be enough for you to say, "I was at the battle of Austerlitz," for you to receive the answer, "There is a brave man!"'⁴²

On these occasions he often made use of his memory and paraphrased the text of great authors. In the Thirty-First Bulletin we find these words :

'We may say with truth that death itself was afraid of us, and fled before us into the ranks of the enemy. A nation may be beaten by my army, and yet have claims to glory.'⁴³

The man whose pen was so plain-spoken, so rough in his correspondence, did not disdain, on the field of battle, to have recourse to the most declamatory and stilted expressions.

'Drive into the waves,' he exclaimed to the army that was setting out for the conquest of Naples—'drive into the waves, if they wait to give you the chance, that is, the feeble battalions

⁴² 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xi., p. 444, No. 9,537, To the Army, Austerlitz, December 3, 1805.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, t. xi., p. 459, No. 9,546, December 3, 1805.

of these tyrants of the sea! Do not delay in informing me that the sanctity of treaties is avenged, and that the manes of my brave soldiers massacred in the ports of Sicily, on their return from Egypt, after having escaped all the perils of shipwreck, deserts and battles, are at length appeased.'⁴⁴

In 1815 he thus poetically described his return from Elba :

‘The eagle, bearing the national colours, will fly from steeple to steeple till it reaches the towers of Notre Dame.’⁴⁵

Before closing this analysis of Napoleon’s private feelings, we must defend him against the charge of not being a Frenchman, which has been recently formulated in these words :

‘He was clearly neither a Frenchman nor a man of the eighteenth century. He belonged to another race and to another time. At first sight one could distinguish in him the foreigner, the Italian.’⁴⁶

Is ‘first sight’ sufficient to justify the formation of such an opinion? To our minds the man who has been developed by this study, who has

⁴⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xi., p. 509, No. 9,625, December 27, 1805.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, t. xxviii., p. 4, No. 21,682, March 1, 1815.

⁴⁶ H. Taine, ‘Les Origines de la France Contemporaine,’ ‘Le Régime Moderne,’ t. i., p. 5.

exposed himself to our searching glances, seems in every respect a man of the eighteenth century, identical with the men of his own time. Born in the middle class, Napoleon was middle-class to the backbone, in his habits, his qualities, his defects, his actions.

How could the man be Italian who replenished the coffers of the bankrupt Directory with Italian gold; who despoiled Italy of her art treasures and carried them to the museums of Paris; who said: 'There are eighteen million people in Italy, and I can scarcely find two men'?⁴⁷ And, again: 'They are a soft, superstitious, and cowardly race.'⁴⁸

How could the man be Italian who, in 1814, still possessed Italy and her army intact, and who yet never dreamed of taking refuge and defending himself there, when by so doing he might have preserved the Italian crown?

Not a Frenchman! the son of her who, in 1793, saluted the fire lighted by the enemies of her country, and which was destroying her all, with the cry of 'Long live France!'⁴⁹ The man who said: 'Whoso fights against his country is like a son who kills his mother.'⁵⁰ The man of

⁴⁷ Bourrienne, 'Mémoires,' t. i., p. 139. Count Melzi and Dandolo.

⁴⁸ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. iii., p. 369, No. 2,292, October 7, 1797.

⁴⁹ Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte,' t. i., p. 87.

⁵⁰ Bourrienne, 'Mémoires,' t. iv., p. 7.

whom Stendhal said : 'He loved France as a lover his mistress.'⁵¹ The man who wrote : 'I should blush to be a Frenchman, if they were as cowardly as the Minister of the Interior says they are.'⁵² The man to whom 'twenty thousand throats called aloud in 1815, under the walls of the Élysée, imploring him to resist and not to abdicate,'⁵³ and who preferred his own humiliation to civil war. Not a Frenchman! But what heart save that of a Frenchman could have breathed forth these two words—'Sacred ground!'—of the soil of France when profaned by the tread of the invader?⁵⁴

Is it not dishonouring the memory of the Emperor even to refute such an imputation?

How could the hero of Imperial rule in France be anything but a Frenchman? No arguments can break down this evidence. So long as one human being feels a thrill of chivalrous sympathy with glory, the greatest pride of France will be centred, will be fixed, will be exalted, in the name of NAPOLEON.

⁵¹ 'Vie de Napoléon,' pp. 5, 34.

⁵² 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxvii., p. 239, No. 21,360, February 24, 1814.

⁵³ Duke of Rovigo, 'Mémoires,' t. viii., p. 167; Jung, 'Mémoires de Lucien,' t. iii., pp. 309, 310.

⁵⁴ Marmont, 'Mémoires,' t. vi., p. 7.

BOOK VII.

THE RULER

I.

Why Napoleon occupied the First Place—The Art of Governing.

To represent Napoleon as a mere adventurer, who reached the highest position thanks to unlimited ambition, is more a vague and unimportant statement than a definition.

To imagine that an obscure officer was seized one day with the complicated idea of becoming master of his country, and that he thenceforward devoted all thoughts and calculations to this chimerical object, is to attribute to such an officer schemes which resemble mental alienation rather than ambition.

The simple truth is that Napoleon occupied the chief place because he was THE ONLY MAN IN FRANCE CAPABLE OF OCCUPYING IT. Of this he had given proof by displaying, when in command of the Army of Italy in 1796, all the qualities necessary to the head of a Government. Nobody before him had shown these qualities since France had begun to struggle out of the anarchy to which she had been reduced by the Revolution.

Who else, indeed, could have been summoned to the leadership except he who, three years previously, had taken command of an army in rags, had shown that he possessed, in more than one branch of military science, the art of restoring confidence to despairing men, of transforming destitution into prosperity, of putting a stop to waste, of obliging men to be honest ; the art, in a word, of making out of nothing an instrument of glory and fortune for his country ?

To bring into play his enormous powers, Napoleon, destined by his birth to a struggling life, did not need the stimulant of overweening pride. He merely followed the dictates of his temperament—that of an industrious man, rebellious where he met with discouragement, but a slave to the scrupulous performance of duty.

Napoleon, faithful to his habits of work, after his disgrace, when so many would have given way to despair, traced out plans of campaign which should ensure success to the Generals on active service.

His face furrowed with premature wrinkles, his threadbare coat hanging loosely on a frame emaciated by privation, he went to the War Office to make known his plans and ideas gratuitously, without making any claim to be allowed to carry them out himself. His relations with Pontécoulant, the military Under-Secretary, place this fact beyond dispute.

What motives, except those of love of his work and patriotism, can we discover to account for steps whose only result could have been to cover the Commander-in-Chief, Schérer, with glory? There is no trace here of exaggerated ambition.

It was simply by his conscientious and persistent application to work that Napoleon brought himself to the front : by his zeal and perseverance he forced open the doors of the War Office, and, once there, made himself so valuable that he was called for on the 13th Vendémiaire.

As soon as he emerged from obscurity, he was charged to put into practice the memorable plans he had elaborated, and which Schérer had rejected as the lucubrations of a diseased brain.

II.

Difficult Situations—Destitution of the Army of Italy.

FROM the day on which the command of an army was entrusted to Napoleon, the misfortunes of France took a complete hold of his mind, to the exclusion of any personal thoughts. Accustomed to realize difficulties, he saw at a glance that his poor country, nearly worn out, could not continue to support, even with victories to aid her, armies 'in which the deficit in everything was so extreme that the Generals never ceased complaining and demanding fresh supplies.'¹

It was at this period that Hoche was writing :

'Without bread, without shoes, without clothes, without money, surrounded by enemies, that is our deplorable position. If the deputies be really so clever, let them feed the soldiers, and pay and clothe the officers.'²

¹ Mallet du Pan, 'Correspondance Inédite avec la Cour de Vienne,' t. ii., p. 31.

² Hoche, 'Lettres des 22 Vendémiaire et 23 Pluviôse, An iv. ; General Ambert, 'Portraits Militaires,' pp. 78, 79.

Napoleon understood that the mother-country needed children strong enough to provide for themselves in the first place ; to furnish her with means of subsistence, in the second place ; and, in the third place, to increase her glory.

The problem was no new one to the Lieutenant of artillery who had been at Valence and Auxonne. He intended to act towards his country as he had already acted towards his own family, when they were reduced to misery in Corsica. He would require from others what he gave himself. He started with the conviction that every man, wherever he be, covers with the sole of his boot a space of ground which ought to support him, and he made the solemn resolution, not only to ask nothing from his unhappy country, but to help her in her distress.

On taking up the command of the Army of Italy, he expressed his thoughts in a letter to an old friend at Toulon, a modest War Commissioner :

‘ The Government expect great things from the Army of Italy ; they must be realized, and the country rescued from the crisis under which she is now labouring.’⁸

What Napoleon called an army was, in reality, nothing but an agglomeration of ragged, hungry,

⁸ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. i., p. 108 ; No. 94, March 27, 1796.

undisciplined men, of whom an eye-witness has left us the following description :⁴

‘The French army had long been exposed to horrible privations. They were often without provisions, and these soldiers, stationed at the summit of the Alps, and spending eight months of the year in snow, were without boots or clothing. One thing is certain, and that is that it would be difficult nowadays to form an idea of the destitution and misery of the old Army of Italy. One fact will suffice : the rich men in the army had *assignats*, and *assignats* were valueless in Italy.’

A week before Bonaparte’s arrival, one of the Generals of the Army of Italy wrote as follows to his father :

‘The Government, entirely taken up with the Rhine, leaves us without money, and at the mercy of the swindlers who manage us. The only thing fine here is the indomitable courage of both men and officers, and their unalterable patience. France would be horrified did she know how many have died of starvation and sickness. A poor private, dragging himself along, will suddenly stop, sink down and die. My father, if we do not take the offensive, I foresee terrible horrors, and rather than assist at the burial of an army I will send in my papers.’⁵

⁴ Stendhal, ‘Vie de Napoléon,’ pp. 102, 127.

⁵ Edmond Chevrier, ‘Le Général Joubert’ (from his unpublished letters), Bourg.

In presence of this appalling position of affairs, we do not find Napoleon repudiating his responsibilities, or throwing them on to others. Here is his letter to the Directory, on the subject of his predecessor :

‘I have every possible reason to be pleased with the frankness and honesty of General Schérer. By his loyal conduct, and his anxiety to give me every information that could be of service to me, he has gained every right to my gratitude.’⁶

In addition to the existing penury, he soon discovered that the subsidies placed at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief for the campaign were illusory, ‘that the bonds sent by the Treasury were protested, that a sum of 600,000 livres (£37,500) that had been announced had never arrived.’

Certainly, in this utter disorganization, there was enough to discourage the stoutest heart, but Napoleon, like a good workman who is not afraid of hard work, finishes his report to the Directory with this exclamation :

‘In spite of all we shall manage !’⁷

These words are heroic in their simplicity and sincerity, and contain nothing that partakes of the nature or language of an adventurer. An

⁶ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. i., p. 109, No. 94, March 28, 1796.

⁷ *Ibid.*, t. i., p. 128, No. 126, April 8, 1796.

adventurer would plunge head first into the unknown, and expect everything from luck, whereas Napoleon, on the contrary, disputes mathematically with chance every possibility of the smallest accident.

‘What you desire,’ he wrote to the Directory, ‘is a miracle, and I cannot perform miracles. It is only by means of prudence, dexterity, and care that one can arrive at great ends and surmount obstacles ; by any other means one is bound to fail. There is but one step between triumph and failure. I have noticed, in the most important events, that a mere nothing may turn the scale.’⁸

By multiplying his efforts, by considering no task unworthy of his rank or his hands, by exacting order in everything and everywhere, by mercilessly suppressing wastefulness, by watching day and night, it was at this price, and this price only, that he could secure peace to his conscience, always tender and scrupulous.

⁸ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. iii., p. 369, No. 2,292, October 7, 1797.

III.

Want of Prestige at First—Proclamations—Severe Measures—
Early Days in Command—Penury and Want of Discipline.

NAPOLÉON acknowledged the difficulties and complexities of the part he had to play in writing to the Directory :

‘ You have no idea of the administrative and military state of the army. When I joined it, it was honeycombed with the spirit of mutiny—without bread, without discipline, without order. Greedy contractors left us destitute of everything. My life here is inconceivable : I arrive tired, have to sit up all night to do accounts, and to be everywhere to keep order.’¹

Nor was that all ; what Napoleon did not confess, as it was to his interest to conceal it, was that, far from possessing the confidence indispensable to a Commander-in-Chief, his authority was very much disputed. Though the name of Napoleon to us symbolizes immense prestige,

¹ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. 1., p. 179, No. 220, April 26, 1796.

together with an irresistible enthusiasm, it was not so in the Army of Italy in 1796.

‘The Bonaparte,’ says Marmont,² ‘who rises before our imaginations as powerful, glorious, and victorious has never commanded. Though his name may not have been unknown in the Army of Italy, he had never been associated with the idea of supreme power. Not only were his orders not received with confidence (that power that increases the means tenfold), but the rivalries and claims of the other Generals, much older than himself and of much longer service, were calculated to encourage disobedience.’

‘In Italy,’ says General Lasalle, ‘he was thought little of, and had the reputation of being a mathematician and a dreamer; he had neither prospects nor friends; he was looked upon as a bear because always alone and buried in thought.’³

This, therefore, was Napoleon’s position: no pecuniary resources, no moral authority, no army, but an incoherent assemblage of unprovided, undisciplined men. With these elements he had to conquer the foreigner and to help his country.

Such an enterprise seemed beyond human power. Had he boasted that he could carry it through, Napoleon would only have given evidence of rashness, but before pronouncing an

² ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., pp. 151, 152.

³ Roederer, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 561.

opinion he had calculated how much advantage he could gain from the atoms that he was about to consolidate in order to convert them into a serviceable weapon.

Here is no impatience, no trace of that undisciplined ardour which, however, his youth might have excused. The General of twenty-seven years consecrates his talents and his toils to the gradual and unattractive task of reorganization.

Here is the first proclamation to his troops on his arrival at the Headquarters of Nice, on March 27 :

‘Soldiers, you are naked and badly fed ; the Government owes you much and can give you nothing. Your patience and courage amid these trials are admirable, but they gain for you no glory, no reputation. I will lead you to the most fertile plains in the world. Rich provinces, large towns will be in your power ; you will there find honour, wealth, and glory. Soldiers of the Army of Italy, are you failing in courage and constancy ?’⁴

This proclamation, of which the old soldiers said, ‘His fertile plains are all rubbish. Let him begin by giving us shoes in which to get down to them,’⁵ has been much discussed.

⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. i., p. 117, No. 91, March 27, 1796.

⁵ Général Thomas, ‘La Vie Militaire.’

People have tried to discover in it the beginning of a system of command which sought to make itself popular by means of unwholesome seductions, by exciting coarse appetites. But if we reflect, we shall see that it was difficult for the leader of an army to speak otherwise. Could he induce starving men to follow him except by promising them bread? Did not Moses promise to lead his followers into 'a land flowing with milk and honey'?

If the French army fancied that its commander was a man inclined to tolerate disorder, it was quickly undeceived.

Before Napoleon had been with it two days, it discovered that it had to deal with a General who exacted absolutely passive obedience, and who would hesitate at nothing to obtain his ends. Officers and men were convinced that they were to be submitted to pitiless discipline after reading the following order :

'The third battalion of the 209th demi-brigade has been guilty of disobedience; it has dishonoured itself by its mutinous spirit, and by refusing to march with the divisions actively employed. The officers have behaved badly; the Commandant, Captain Duvernay, has shown ill-will. You will arrest Captain Duvernay, and bring him before a court-martial at Toulon. You will bring before a court-martial at Nice the

grenadiers who are supposed to have been the authors of the mutiny. The officers and non-commissioned officers who did not set a good example by starting, and who remained silently in the ranks, are all guilty. They are to be dismissed immediately, and sent home. This letter is to be read to the whole army.'⁶

Three weeks later a fresh general order appeared, even more categorical :

'The Commander-in-Chief sees with disgust the horrible pillage in which wicked men indulge, who only return to their corps after the battle is over, having given themselves up to excesses dishonourable to the French army and name.

'The Commander-in-Chief reserves to himself the right of dealing with superior officers, or War Commissioners against whom complaints are brought.

'Generals of Division are authorized to disgrace immediately, and if necessary to send to Fort Carré, at Antibes, under arrest, any officers who, by their example, have countenanced the horrible pillage which has recently taken place.

'Generals of Division are authorized to shoot at once any officers or soldiers who, by their example, excite others to pillage, and thereby

⁶ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. i., p. 111, No. 97, order to General Berthier, March 29, 1796.

destroy discipline, spread disorder in the army, and compromise its safety and its glory.

‘ Every officer or non-commissioned officer who does not follow his flag, or who, without legitimate reason, is absent at the moment of a combat, shall be dismissed, and his name shall be sent to his Department of France, so that he may be disgraced as a coward in the eyes of his fellow-citizens.

‘ Any soldier convicted of having twice missed a combat shall be degraded in presence of his battalion ; his uniform shall be stripped off him, and he shall be sent across the Var to mend the roads for the remainder of the campaign.’⁷

It will be seen that he had to recall to a sense of their duties a number of soldiers who had been spoiled by the laxity of preceding commanders.

What General has addressed his troops with more vigour, has shown less desire for the affection which can be purchased by weak indulgence ? Who has ever, in time of war, repressed evil passions with equal determination and severity ?

This resolutely announced severity excludes any idea of seeking for popularity, which is more easily obtained by servile complaisance than by implacable strictness.

The enormous sum of work done by Napoleon during these days would be incredible, had we not

⁷ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. i., p. 214, No. 175, April 12, 1796.

official documents under our eyes. For March 29 alone, three days after his arrival, we find :

Repression of the mutiny in the 209th demi-brigade.

Formation of a workshop for 110 workmen to be sent to Finale.

Detailed subdivision of two divisions of cavalry.

Order to General Saint-Hilaire to assure himself as to whether there are sufficient stables to lodge the horses.

Similar order to General Sérurier for the second division.

Appointment of Generals Mouret and Barbentane to commands.

Order to General Despinoy, at Toulon, to join the army at Nice with this special recommendation : ' Before starting, you will make quite sure that all the carriages I ordered have left.'

Order to General Parra to demand the addition to the active list of the National Guard of Antibes.

Order to General Berthier to discover, among the officers of the 209th demi-brigade, those who have done well, and to submit to him their names.

A review, followed by the publication of an order of the day.

A promotion in his personal staff.

Order to those Generals who have not the number of aides-de-camp allowed by law to make up their staff to the prescribed number. This order concludes thus :

' Generals must understand that no private considerations must influence their choice ; talent, morality, and a pure and enlightened patriotism, ought alone to decide them. Generals are warned that the chief of the staff has strict orders to subject aides-de-camp to an examination, and to remove those who show themselves unfit to second the work of the Generals.'

If to this long and varied list be added the numerous verbal orders, which could not be preserved, we shall have some idea of the

enormous amount of work that Napoleon imposed upon himself.

Every day, too, in addition to the military cares, properly so called, there is room to be found for various little details :

‘Order to distribute fresh meat every other day, taking care that battalions that have received salt meat to-day shall have fresh to-morrow, and that those who have had fresh meat to-day shall receive salt to-morrow.

‘Order to restore to the military coffers sums improperly taken from them by the War Commissioners, so that it may be used for the good of the service, and in procuring for the soldiers what is due to them.’

We have the following orders to a War Commissioner :

‘Go to Varaggio and contract for forage to the amount of 30,000 francs (£1,200), on condition that the forage is delivered at Loano, Finale, and Oneille, before the 25th of this month. I will meet at Albenga the engagements you make. I will send 5,000 pairs of shoes from here to-morrow ; 12,000 will shortly leave Marseilles. You will hand on the enclosed letter, wherein Callot orders his house to send 10,000 pairs of shoes and 800 quintals of hay. Hasten the departure of the shoes you have bought.’⁸

⁸ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. i., p. 119, No. 112, April 1, 1796.

Orders to the Generals 'to accelerate by every means in their power the work relative to the new scheme of reorganization. Generals and Adjutant-Generals are not to lose an instant in providing the troops with everything that may be necessary to them. The Commander-in-Chief is informed that the employés in the forage department venture to alter the rations arbitrarily, under the pretext of scarcity in the stores. They are expressly forbidden to deliver any rations below the proportion fixed, without a written order from the War Commissioner.'⁹

Letter to citizen Lambert, Commissary-in-Chief: 'I forward to you, citizen Commissioner,' writes Napoleon,¹⁰ 'a complaint upon the weight of the rations, and on the short measure that is in use in the forage department. It is proved that the army is robbed. The Commander-in-Chief orders you to draw up a return of the weight of the trusses of straw that remain, and that have been handed over to the charge of the sentinel. You will keep citizen Michel under arrest until you can discover who made up the trusses, and who used the short measure. Have the goodness to let me know to-morrow morning that my orders have been executed.'

⁹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. i., p. 121, No. 115, April 3, 1796.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, t. i., p. 127, No. 125, April 7, 1796.

‘Send to Carcare, without delay, all the bread that has been made, and hasten the making of the rest. Nothing can excuse the smallest delay. The General-in-Chief desires me to repeat to you that the success of our armies depends upon their nourishment, and that he will hold you responsible if either bread or brandy fails. In the name of our country I desire you to hasten by every means both the baking and the despatching of the bread.’¹¹

That Napoleon saw to everything, and went everywhere, is proved by this letter to Carnot :

‘I have not an engineer officer capable of reconnoitring Ceva, and I must go thither myself, although my presence is much needed on my right, where, perhaps within an hour, I may be fighting with Beaulieu. Would you believe that I have not here one engineer officer from Mézières, not one who has ever been through a siege, or been employed in a fortified place? The engineers and the artillery are given up to the worst kind of favouritism ; the good of the service is never consulted, but only the convenience of individuals.’¹²

On the same day, in another letter, insinuating that had it not been for these defects his victory

¹¹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. i., p. 139, No. 140, April 16, 1796.

¹² *Ibid.*, t. i., p. 156, No. 175, April 13, 1796.

at Montenotte would have been more complete, he returns to the subject in these words :

‘You cannot imagine my despair, I might almost say my fury, at not having a single engineer officer upon whose quickness I can rely, and at finding myself in a plain without light artillery.’¹³

All the foregoing orders have been selected from 123 different letters and orders, written by Napoleon during the first twenty-four days of his command.

In that short space of time, after remaining stationary at Nice for a week, the Headquarters had been changed twelve times, six successful skirmishes had taken place, and three pitched battles had been gained!

Nothing could prove more clearly than these quotations the difficulties that Napoleon had to contend with, nothing could more completely exculpate him from the charge of being an adventurer, levelled against him by his enemies.

¹³ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. i., p. 158, No. 176, April 16, 1796.

IV.

State of France—Why Napoleon went to Egypt—His Return
—Popular Enthusiasm—Unanimous Prayers of the Nation
—Directors who direct nothing.

IT cannot be denied that no mere adventurer, eager for military glory, could have performed such prodigies. A disciplinarian was needed, incapable of regarding the rank he had acquired as a step nearer indolence and repose, or of considering his position of authority as a sort of pedestal from which he could never stoop, without loss of dignity, to occupy himself with details. A resolute man was wanted, with plenty of common-sense, who understood that mental conflicts in this world generally lead to physical ones, and that, although a flash of genius may point out to a General the attack which must insure his enemy's defeat, if his soldiers want, not weapons or cartridges, but even shoe-strings, they may lose their boots, stand still, and bring the most scientific strategical movement to nothing.

This perception of the decisive influence of

details, apparently trifling but in reality all-important, on the greatest events, spurred Napoleon to his incessant activity, and made him in six months a commander thenceforward universally respected, who raised his army out of its misery, marched from triumph to triumph, and was enabled also considerably to replenish the empty Treasury of France.

A month had scarcely elapsed since his acceptance of the command, when, on April 26, he wrote to the Directory :

‘ This beautiful country offers us considerable resources ; the province of Mondovi alone will give us 1,000,000 francs (£40,000) in taxes.’¹

And on May 9, to the Minister for War, he says :

‘ The more men you send me, the more easily I shall be able to feed them.’²

A week later, on May 18, he places at the disposal of the Directory ‘ 2,000,000 francs (£80,000) in jewellery and bullion, besides twenty-four pictures, masterpieces of the Italian school.’³

On June 1 he sends to Paris 2,000,000 francs in gold, with authority to draw bills of exchange on him to the amount of ‘ 4,000,000 or 5,000,000.’⁴

¹ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. i., p. 186, No. 233, April 26, 1796.

² *Ibid.*, t. i., p. 251, No. 366, May 9, 1796.

³ *Ibid.*, t. i., p. 292, Nos. 444 and 445, Milan, May 18, 1796.

⁴ *Ibid.*, t. i., p. 346, No. 539, June 1, 1796.

On June 8 he sends 1,000,000 francs (£40,000) to his brothers-in-arms on the Rhine, and in announcing it to the Minister of Finance says :

‘ You have at this moment about 10,000,000 francs (£400,000) upon which you may depend ; in a short time you shall have as much more.’⁵

Finally, in the opinion of Mallet du Pan, who at the opening of the campaign nicknamed Napoleon ‘ a whippersnapper with unbrushed hair, a mannikin of five feet three,’ ‘ the wealth taken from Italy during the one year 1796 did not amount to less than 400,000,000 francs (£16,000,000).’⁶

Another enemy, Sir Walter Scott, says :

‘ It must be here stated that Napoleon reserved for himself no appreciable portion of the booty, although frequently in need of it.’⁷

Other Generals before Napoleon had gained victories—men like Pichegru, Jourdan, Moreau, Souham, Brune, Kellermann, Championnet and Masséna, had rendered themselves illustrious on many a field of battle ; but none had revealed that power of organization of which the France of 1799 stood in need as much as the Army of Italy

⁵ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. i., p. 379, No. 591, June 8, 1796.

⁶ Mallet du Pan, ‘ Correspondance Inédite avec la Cour de Vienne,’ t. iii., pp. 141, 223.

⁷ Scott, ‘ Life of Napoleon Bonaparte,’ vol. iv.

of 1796. For the one as for the other, the first point was to live, without thinking of conquering.

Of this we may be certain if we will but read the description of France written by a contemporary :

‘ Merit persecuted everywhere, honest men driven from public offices, brigands collected from all parts in their infernal caverns, scoundrels in power, apologists of the Terror in the tribune ; spoliation established under the name of forced loans ; assassination prepared, with thousands of victims under the name of hostages ; the signal for murder, pillage and fire always lurking under a proclamation stating that the country is in danger ; in the clubs, and in the *Corps Législatif*, the same yells, the same execrations as in 1793 ; the same executioners, the same victims, no liberty, no property, no security for citizens, no finances, no credit for the State ; Europe let loose against us almost through its length and breadth ; our armies routed, Italy lost, French territory almost invaded.’⁸

This description is completed by these lines of another author, who says :

‘ Since the failure of the public debt, of which three - quarters were paid in bonds which lost ninety-seven per cent. immediately, circulation has been stopped, public stocks are no longer quoted,

⁸ *Journal de Paris*, 19 Brumaire, year ix.

industry is dead, capital has disappeared, exchange is falling every day, agriculture, crushed in its turn, is beginning to groan as well as trade. The Government has consumed, during this year that is closing, 1,200,000,000 francs in hard cash (£48,000,000), has suspended half its public payments to shareholders, bondholders, and public officials; after despoiling the hospitals, it leaves the sick in horrible misery, and does not even provide for the wants of the prisoners.⁹

After considering this picture, the strength and the power of hope in the man who, three years previously, had struggled with an analogous position, and had reduced chaos to order, will be realized.

And it will be equally clear why the man was remembered who had performed the miracle of breathing life into the Army of Italy, when he had to rescue France from ruin, and why millions of voices sent up a desperate appeal when Napoleon was in Egypt, far from all political combinations and intrigues.

Why did he go to Egypt? Many unfavourable conjectures have been formed upon this subject.

Some have said that when he returned to Paris he already aspired to supreme honours, but perceived that he had not as yet sufficient popularity,

⁹ Mallet du Pan, 'Correspondance Inédite,' etc., t. ii., p. 373.

and consequently formed the plan of starting for Egypt.¹⁰

That is not the case. During his most glorious successes in Italy in 1797 (successes of which he could not foresee the consequences upon his own future), he was already discussing at Passeriano, with Monge, the best means of obtaining possession of Egypt, according to plans already spoken of during the reigns of Louis XV. and Louis XVI. At the same period he sent for Poussielgue, and desired him to work out the combinations which secured Malta for France by means of a surprise.¹¹

As to the idea of exercising a dictatorship in France, supposing that he had entertained it previously to this time, his departure for the East, it must be allowed, completely put an end to it, for the ambitious man would be very simple who would go all that distance in search of chimerical success when he was acclaimed by the crowd and had it offered to him daily in Paris.

Bonaparte must have seen clearly that during his absence there would be an opening for every conspiracy, and that he risked finding on his return any other form of government, even

¹⁰ H. Taine, '*Origines de la France Contemporaine*,' '*Le Régime Moderne*,' t. i., p. 71.

¹¹ Lavalette, '*Mémoires*,' t. i., p. 247; Marshal Marmont, '*Mémoires*,' t. i., p. 357.

royalty, established, which would leave no chance for any competitor whatsoever.

No great wisdom is required to observe that the absent are always wrong, and that in revolutionary times a man in the heart of Egypt is less able to seize favourable openings than when living in the Rue Chantierine, become the Rue de la Victoire in honour of Napoleon.

It would be nearer the truth, we think, to say that when Bonaparte came back from Italy, decorated with the double distinction of glory and peace, very superior in every respect to those who then governed, removed by his age from the position of Director (forty years of age was then the limit), he found himself obliged to act as a sort of bodyguard to the powers that were, worthy successors of Aubry and Letourneur, being quite as incapable, and even more corrupt.

Then, like any young General in his place, anxious for military exploits, his one wish was to obtain a new command which should be in conformity with his tastes, and would remove him from the political turpitude that surrounded him in Paris.

Consequently, when he decided to return from Egypt, yielding to the entreaties addressed to him from Paris, he was not received in France as an untrustworthy and dangerous adventurer, but as a real saviour.

Every contemporary attests the popular delight by which his return was saluted :

‘ Had he fallen from heaven,’ says the Duke of Rovigo, ‘ his appearance could not have created more surprise and enthusiasm.’¹²

‘ In the road,’ says Monsieur de Barante, ‘ I met, just outside Briec, the carriage of General Bonaparte on his way back from Egypt. It is difficult to picture to one’s self the enthusiasm produced by his return. He said himself that the acclamations with which he was received first suggested to him the mission of saving France, and it was the truth. Without knowing what he intended to do, without foreseeing what he was going to become, every one in every class realized that he would not delay in putting an end to the miseries under which France suffered. People embraced each other in the streets, they threw themselves in front of his carriage in their endeavours to catch a glimpse of him.’¹³

Monsieur de Ségur relates the same story of enthusiasm :¹⁴

‘ At the great news of his return, spread by the telegraph, all the bells had been rung and bonfires lighted. When it was announced in the theatres, the performances were interrupted by cries, transports of delight, and patriotic songs. In other

¹² ‘ Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 232. ¹³ ‘ Souvenirs,’ t. i., p. 44.

¹⁴ ‘ Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 483.

places crowds quickly collected, men shook each other's hands, and fell into each other's arms weeping with joy and enthusiasm. Even in the Council of the Five Hundred his brother Lucien was unanimously elected President. In short, a great nation had suddenly passed from melancholy and despair to proud and triumphant intoxication.'

There is no doubt that when he quitted Egypt Napoleon told himself that he had an important part to play in the affairs of his country. After the splendid services he had rendered, were not his claims equal to those of Gohier the lawyer, or General Moulin? But that he had long nourished a secret plan of any machination is not true, and is denied by the man who was most likely to know, being his friend and private secretary.

'It would be a great mistake,' says Bourrienne,¹⁵ 'to fancy that at the time of his return Bonaparte had any fixed plan or design. It may be said that everybody in France did his best to shorten for Bonaparte the road to power.'

'No sooner had he set foot on the soil of France,' says General Mathieu Dumas,¹⁶ 'than he was regarded as its liberator. His very presence was sufficient to strike fear into the hearts of the terrorists. He found every party ready to offer him dictatorial power.'

¹⁵ 'Mémoires,' t. iii., p. 32. ¹⁶ 'Souvenirs,' t. iii., p. 167.

Among the soldiers who supported Napoleon on the 18th Brumaire, we may mention Moreau, Macdonald, Lefebvre, Berthier, Lannes, Marmont, Murat, Sérurier, Moncey, Beurnonville, Admirals Bruix, Ganteaume, and others.

Bernadotte was conspicuous by his absence, and he was the man for whom the Emperor thought he had never done enough, and who bore arms against France in 1814.

The names of the civilians who encouraged Napoleon are no less important: Talleyrand, Fouché, De la Meurthe, Chénier, Sieyès, Roederer, Daunou, Monge, Cambacérès, etc.

Ought he to have refused the unanimous homage of the nation, disappointed its hopes, resisted the entreaties of its most influential members, both civil and military? Ought he to have hesitated to trouble the sweet serenity of the Directory, which directed nothing, unless it were the bankruptcy of France—that fatal and unmistakable symptom of the almost exhausted condition of the country?

There was, it must be remembered, no Government.

A Government only exists so long as it guarantees the safety and property of the nation, and provides for the necessary service of the State.

As to the public Treasury, it was more than

empty. Instead of distributing anything, it had to wait until the Generals could procure by their conquests the resources indispensable to public life. Not only did the army receive nothing, but it had to provide for the needs of the State.

There was nothing in the functions of the five Directorial chatterboxes that in the smallest degree resembled a Government, and so well aware of this fact were they themselves that three of them had given up the pretence before the 18th Brumaire ; of these, two—Sieyès and Roger Ducos—had openly gone over to Bonaparte, while the third, Barras, hung back in the hope of making better terms.

So that the Directory itself was utterly incapable of taking any measures to prevent the *coup d'état* which was preparing to the knowledge of everybody. The President of this famous Government, Gohier, thus describes the position in his memoirs :¹⁷

‘No decision could be arrived at by the Directory unless at least three members were present. The surrender of two of our number and the absence of Barras paralyzed the Directorial power in our hands, and it was the constitution itself that made it impossible for us to defend it.’

There remains the constitution, relative to which Gohier has said : ‘A man suffering from

¹⁷ T, i., p. 243.

hydrophobia, when offered a glass of water, does not show greater horror than did Bonaparte at the mention of the constitution.¹⁸ Want of respect for the fundamental laws of a country is no doubt a crime. Nevertheless, if the constitution of France was really nothing more than the engine of her destruction, was it not necessary to abolish it and evict its supporters at any cost?

When the public safety is threatened, prompt decisions are assuredly demanded. Whatever consideration the opinions of philosophers may merit in the sphere of abstract principles and pure theory, it is easy to understand that in a practical state of things, under the impatient pressure of political and military authorities, Napoleon did not scruple to justify the hopes which the great majority of his countrymen had placed in him.

‘Napoleon,’ says a contemporary who was not biased in his favour, ‘did not injure liberty, as it did not exist; he strangled the monster of anarchy, and saved France, and that was his greatest triumph.’¹⁹

¹⁸ Gohier, *‘Mémoires,’* t. i., p. 243.

¹⁹ Mathieu Dumas, *‘Souvenirs,’* t. iii., p. 168.

V.

Hard Work—The Best Soldier in the Army—The Emperor
at Work with his Clerks—Examination of Every Question
—*Le Fils de la Poule Blanche*—Results.

THE man who had inspired this blind faith, be it said to the honour and for the instruction of humanity, did not owe his success to any monstrous vices ; on the contrary, he owed it to the uprightness and simplicity of his manners, which contrasted so strongly with the villainies and the deceits of his time. He owed it, above all, to the spirit of professional duty with which he had been inoculated, so to speak, in his childhood, together with the wish to rise.

That master passion, inherent in his character, strongly and uniformly coloured all his actions, from Brienne to St. Helena. Restless by nature, like all who have experienced privation, Napoleon, in spite of the great results already attained, believed that everything would be lost if for one moment he relaxed his rule of hard work and incessant watchfulness.

Far from believing himself a heaven-born genius, Napoleon sought to rise to the height of the duties constantly put before him by redoubling his activity, his studies and his efforts.

General, Commander-in-Chief, Head of the State, the task he set himself became heavier as his rank became higher. To know his work and to do his work were, in his eyes, the two objects on which all his moral and physical powers must be concentrated.

Dogged determination had put him in possession of the whole art of war. If he distinguished himself by his profound knowledge of tactics and strategy, he was no less remarkable for the ease with which he passed from the most abstruse scientific theories to the humblest of those practical details on which the security of armies really rests.

It may be said that the best military leader of modern times was, to speak plainly, only the best soldier in his army—that is to say, the best instructed in his business. The Emperor was right in saying :

‘ There is nothing in war that I cannot do for myself. If I have no one to make gunpowder, I can do it ; gun-carriages, I can build them ; cannon, I can cast them ; if someone is wanted to give instruction in details of drill, I can give it.’¹

¹ Roederer, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 544.

‘He knew,’ says Fleury de Chaboulon,² ‘how long a tailor required to make a suit of clothes, a wheelwright to make a gun-carriage, a gun-maker to make a musket.’

‘Napoleon,’ writes Sir Neil Campbell in his journal,³ ‘is intimate with every detail of the navy, such as the cost and daily expense of a man-of-war, the various watches on board, the difference between an English and a French vessel, the ropes, rigging, etc.’

In fact, on every page of his correspondence, we find him discussing the value of military supplies. One day we find : ‘The bread is bad, and for the meat we pay ten sous to the contractor, whereas the butcher only charges eight sous.’ Another day : ‘The shoes are not worth thirty sous ;’ ‘the military cloaks are absurdly short ; some of them do not reach to the knees ;’ ‘the horses have cost twenty francs more than they ought to have cost ;’ ‘the flax is excellent when it comes to paying for it, and worthless when it comes to using it.’

Another passage runs : ‘I see in Paris the 4th Light Infantry numbers 1,608 effectives and 254 in hospital ; the *bataillon d’élite* is shown as absent, which would make a difference of 2,400 men. This is clearly an error.’⁴ To another

² ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 260.

³ P. 55.

⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. ix., x., xiv., xxii., xxv.,

Minister he himself points out the right way of drawing up an official list. 'I have already told you,' he says, 'that the manner in which you make out your lists does not suit me. . . . It would be better that vessels of all kinds should be repeated as many times as there are districts. For instance, the first district should be divided into seven sheets, one of which will show the sea-going vessels, the second the smaller sailing vessels, etc., etc. The second district should be divided in the same way, the third in the same, and so on.'⁵

The chronology of these extracts shows clearly that the General and the Emperor paid equally minute attention to the smallest administrative details.

He is never weary of pointing out errors in the lists of the strength of different regiments. For instance, when he was asked for 1,500 pairs of boots for a regiment, he replied: 'This is absurd; the regiment has only 1,200 men under arms.'⁶

Urged by the desire to understand thoroughly all the various matters that the Head of the

pp. 127, 349, 283, 374, 463, 277, 493, 129, 341, 455, 431, Nos. 127, 7,727, 8,520, 8,684, 7,919, 11,767, 12,109, 17,675, 17,941, 18,102, 20,183, years 1796, 1804, 1805, 1807, 1811, 1813.

⁵ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxvii., p. 109, No. 13,873, 1808.

⁶ *Ibid.*, years 1796—1813.

Executive ought to know, Napoleon took pains also to study every branch of the civil administration. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he did not believe that nothing was easier than to govern a nation, nor did he trust the efficacy of knowledge obtained from books.

Such was the exactness of his nature, developed by his military education, that he would have thought it unworthy of him to order anything that he could not do himself. An instance of this is given in the following letter, addressed by the Emperor, in the ninth year of his reign, to the Minister of Finance :

‘As soon as I reached Mayence, I ordered Count Daru to give me an account of the money in the Treasury. The most complete anarchy appears to reign there. I am not surprised that the service suffers, although there is plenty of money, for there is no organization. Everything is in the utmost disorder. I was obliged to spend several hours working with the smallest clerks.’⁷

With the latter Napoleon did not clothe himself in Imperial dignity. To the unsatisfactory answers he sometimes received, he would answer :

‘Are you laughing at me? Do you imagine that a man who was not born on the steps of a

⁷ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxv., p. 199, No. 19,865, April 17, 1813.

throne, and who has walked the streets on foot, is to be put off with such reasons as that ?⁸

Nor did he interfere as one knowing nothing. He knew all, having taken the trouble to learn all. On reaching Paris on the 19th Brumaire, the day after his accession to power, he said :

‘ Now we must rebuild, and rebuild solidly, moreover.’⁹

‘ He examined,’ says Roederer,¹⁰ ‘ each question by itself, inquiring into all the authorities, times, experiences, demanding to know how it had been under ancient jurisprudence, under Louis XIV. or Frederick the Great. When a Bill was presented to the First Consul, he rarely failed to ask these questions :

‘ Is this Bill complete ? Does it cover every case ? Why have you not thought of this ? Is that necessary ? Is it right or useful ? How was it formerly in Rome or in France ? What is done nowadays or elsewhere ? Napoleon never failed to calculate for himself even the smallest expense proposed to him ; everything was worked out to the fraction of a centime.’

‘ I am not afraid,’ said the First Consul at his first interview with Mollien, ‘ to seek for examples and rules in past times. If I preserve all that

⁸ Gaudin, Duke of Gaëta, ‘ Mémoires,’ Appendix, p. 73.

⁹ Jung, ‘ Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte,’ t. i., p. 359.

¹⁰ ‘ Mémoires,’ t. iii., pp. 382, 383, 393, 400.

the Revolution has produced in the way of useful novelties, I do not renounce all the good that it destroyed.'¹¹

'I was,' says Mathieu Dumas,¹² 'frequently summoned by the First Consul, who never failed to discuss personally with the Councillors of State to whom he had confided the examination of an administrative question, and who went into the smallest details with admirable precision, without ever losing sight of the principal object, or of the best means of carrying it out.'

The questions put by him in one letter to the War Minister show how many preoccupations were working in his mind at the beginning of his reign :

'I wish to know, immediately, citizen Minister :

' 1. What means you have adopted to remount the cavalry.

' 2. Whether General Gardanne and the other officers employed with the Army of England have received orders to be at their posts by the 24th instant.

' 3. When I shall receive a report upon our present legislation respecting the best means of providing for different ranks in different corps.

' 4. When I shall receive a report upon the

¹¹ Mollien, '*Mémoires*,' t. i., p. 261.

¹² '*Souvenirs*,' t. iii., p. 223.

present condition of the school of artillery and engineering.

‘5. When I shall receive a report upon the existing state of military jurisprudence.

‘6. The report upon the present organization of our artillery transport. Would it be possible and advisable to buy horses on account for the Republic?

‘7. The report upon the laws, rules and customs established in different portions of the public service.

‘8. The report upon the manner in which the troops are paid; upon what was customary previous to, and at different periods of, the Revolution. What had better be done with regard to this?

‘9. The report upon Conscription.

‘10. The report upon the military rewards of the 26th Nivôse.’¹³

A few days later he wrote to the Minister of the Interior:

‘I desire you, citizen Minister, to send me every evening, at ten o’clock, a bulletin containing an analysis of your correspondence with the central officers, Commissioners and other agents of the Government. You will cause forms for this purpose to be printed in three columns. In

¹³ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. vi., p. 72, No. 4505, to General Berthier, January 10, 1800.

the first column shall be the names of all the departments and those of the central Commissioners; in the second, all the remarks resulting from the correspondence relative to provisions, and to the payment of taxes; in the third, remarks relating to the police, and to any discussions that may have been provoked with the authorities.¹⁴

At ten o'clock at night, too, he will have from the Minister for War 'a bulletin concerning all the military divisions and the armies, similar to that furnished to me by the Minister of Police.'¹⁵

This, of course, was independent of the current duties of the Head of a Government, such as reviews, diplomatic receptions, private and public audiences, daily letters, and the examination and signing of official documents. Consequently the Ministerial Councils had to be held at night, and when everyone was falling asleep around him Napoleon would cry :

'Come, come, citizen Ministers, it is only two o'clock; we must earn the money the French nation gives us.'¹⁶

This constant overwork naturally caused grave uneasiness to the First Consul's surroundings.

¹⁴ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. vi., p. 95, No. 4,533, to citizen Lucien Bonaparte, January 18, 1800.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, t. v., p. 96, No. 4,534, January 18, 1800.

¹⁶ Roederer, 'Mémoires,' t. iii., p. 382.

They tried, but in vain, to moderate it. A slave to duty, he refused to consider his strength. When his mother told him he was working too hard, he answered with a laugh :

‘ Do you think I am such a poor creature as all that ?’ *Est-ce que je suis le fils de la poule blanche ?*¹⁷

When his mother, finding that she had no influence over her son, begged Dr. Corvisart to forbid Napoleon to work so late at night, the latter said to his brother Lucien :

‘ Poor Corvisart ! He is always telling me that ! But I have proved to him, as clearly as that two and two make four, that I must use the night to keep my shop going, as the day is insufficient. I should certainly like more rest, but the ox is harnessed and he must plough.’¹⁸

And so he worked and laboured day and night, in the vast field that he had to render fertile, after clearing away the thick layer of ruins with which it was covered.

Thanks to the impulse given by one man, what a gigantic work was accomplished in less than a year ! Religion was re-established, the laws of proscription were abrogated, and, by a stroke of the pen, a hundred thousand citizens were restored to their country ; liberty of work was

¹⁷ Roederer, ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 377.

¹⁸ Jung, ‘Mémoires de Lucien,’ t. ii., pp. 218, 219.

assured, a new Constitution, guarantee of order, was promulgated; the Council of State was instituted, the administrative division of France was created, which continues to our own day: a hundred prefects and four hundred sub-prefects were appointed; the Bank of France and the sinking-fund were established, the Public Treasury was refilled, dividends and pensions were paid in specie, and credit restored; industry and commerce rendered flourishing; equitable and respected Tribunals administered justice, Courts of Appeal were founded; formidable and disciplined armies were organized, Italy conquered, Austria reduced to impotence, the terrified forces of the European coalition dispersed!

It was, in truth, the complete resurrection of down-trodden France, towards which were advancing from all sides foreign armies, drawn thither by the rash hope of obtaining prompt and easy booty.

Would anyone attempt to lessen the value of these enormous and praiseworthy exertions by treating them only as the outcome of the ambition of a young man eager to surround himself with the pleasures of supreme power under every form—or the calculated benefits, selfish in their origin, however ultimately useful to the community, of a man anxious to preserve his leadership and willing to make any effort to secure reelection in future years?

If these insinuations had been well founded, this prodigious energy, this unceasing activity, should have disappeared when Napoleon had touched the extreme limits of human ambition. But the Consul for life, the Emperor secure of glory and power, spared himself as little as the neophyte anxious to show his capabilities and find his proper place.

VI.

Uninterrupted Labour—Physical Fatigue—Reviews held by the Emperor—Confidence of his Men—The Emperor's Recreations.

NAPOLEON, the first to rise and the last to go to bed in his Empire, was wont to say :

‘When the police are warned that I am awake, they dare not go to sleep.’¹

Whether at the Tuileries or on a campaign, his life is but one uninterrupted labour, offered as an example to his subjects. He had to reign in order to show what one man can do in a day, and it is marvellous that his strength should have held out so long under the daily strain imposed upon it.

‘One should be made of cast iron,’ said General Rapp, his aide-de-camp, ‘to live the life we have to spend. Scarcely have we left a carriage than we have to get on horseback and remain there, with the First Consul, for ten and twelve hours at a stretch sometimes.’²

¹ Duke of Vicenza, ‘Souvenirs,’ part ii., t. ii., p. 339.

² Bourrienne, ‘Mémoires,’ t. v., p. 204.

The genuineness of Rapp's complaints is borne out by the Emperor's private letters to Joséphine in 1806 :

'I travel from twenty to twenty-five leagues a day, in carriages, on horseback—in every manner. I go to bed at eight o'clock, and am up again by midnight.'³

After Eylau and Tilsit he writes :

'I reached Dresden yesterday at five o'clock perfectly well, although I had spent a hundred hours in a carriage without getting down.'⁴

Nothing can stop him when he has an object to gain. He has thus painted himself in one of his letters to his wife :

'I vow I am the greatest slave among men. My master has no bowels of compassion, and that master is the nature of things.'⁵

His sense of duty made him as indifferent to physical suffering caused by climate and weather as it did to moral fatigue :

'It is pouring in torrents here. I passed the whole of yesterday at the harbour in a boat and on horseback. I need not add that I was wet through the whole time. At this time of year

³ 'Napoleon's Letters to Joséphine,' t. i., No. lviii., October 13, 1806, 2 a.m.

⁴ Napoleon to Joséphine, t. i., p. 350, No. cxl., July 18, 1807.

⁵ *Ibid.*, t. i., No. lxxiv., December 3, 1806.

one would do nothing if one were afraid of water. Fortunately it agrees with me, and I have never been so well.’⁶

‘I have been, my dear Joséphine, rather overdone lately. I have never been dry, nor have my feet been warm for a whole week, and I am consequently rather poorly.’⁷

These lines were written during the campaign of Austerlitz, one of the most glorious epochs of the Empire.

During the unhappy war in Spain, Monsieur de Ségur describes how the Emperor arrived full gallop at Burgos, ‘after having ridden all night, covered with mud, half dead with cold, hunger, and fatigue.’⁸

Five years later, at Dresden, during the days of defeat, we find him just as alert and indifferent to his own health as in the palmiest days of his youth and success.

‘We only returned to the palace,’ says Caulaincourt, ‘at eleven at night; the Emperor’s clothes were so wet that the water ran from them. That night he had a shivering fit. Nevertheless, when I went in to him at four in the morning, I found him already up, and prepared to mount his horse.

⁶ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. ix., p. 87, No. 7,269, to Cambacérès, Boulogne, November 12, 1803.

⁷ Napoleon to Joséphine, t. i., No. xlii., October 19, 1805.

⁸ ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 268.

Some of us who were about him reproached him for taking so little care of himself.

“It is my business, my children,” he replied cheerily.⁹

He was also doing his business, and how conscientiously! when, at the outset of the Russian campaign, Baron Fain says, ‘On June 23, 1812, at two o’clock in the morning, the Emperor mounted his horse, visited the outposts, took the cloak of a Pole, and rode as far as the Niemen. General Haxo alone accompanied him.’¹⁰

It was also his business to hold reviews, ‘examining the men’s knapsacks himself, looking at their uniforms, and inquiring about their advance pay. A troop of pontoniers came along with forty carriages. The Emperor stopped them, and, pointing to an ammunition waggon numbered 37, asked General Bertrand what it contained. The General enumerated the contents, and Napoleon then had it emptied before him, counted the articles, and, to assure himself that nothing had been left in the waggon, mounted on to the axle-box of the large wheel, holding on to the spokes.’¹¹

Such is the account given by an eye-witness of a review at Schönbrunn in 1809.

⁹ Duke of Vicenza, ‘Souvenirs,’ part i., pp. 248-250.

¹⁰ ‘Manuscrit de 1812,’ t. i., p. 165.

¹¹ Cadet de Gassicourt, ‘Voyage en Autriche,’ p. 108.

Neither in France nor elsewhere were reviews decorative ceremonies to Napoleon, or pretexts for brilliant manœuvres and counter-marchings. In presence of his troops he displayed the full extent of his solicitude for them, and in his anxiety for everyone, even to the youngest conscript, we must seek the cause of his popularity. In their certainty that everything was carefully looked after, his soldiers, assured that they would want for nothing under the leadership of such a man, would follow him blindly anywhere.

At Arras, where her husband commanded an army corps, the Duchesse d'Abrantès saw Napoleon reviewing his troops :

‘He had every tunic unbuttoned, after first examining the cloth of which it was made ; then he inspected every shirt, saw whether the material was good, interrogated the men about their wants and their tastes, and that he did to every individual.’¹²

Napoleon was looking after his business when he waited for the Guard to come to Headquarters at midnight. Seeing his men worn out with fatigue, he exclaimed :

“ ‘Light fires in the middle of the courtyard ; go and fetch straw for them to lie upon ; heat wine for them.’ And it was worth seeing,” adds Coignet, ‘how everyone hurried to do his bidding. The

¹² ‘Mémoires,’ t. v., p. 101.

Emperor would not go ; he remained more than an hour till the hot wine had been served out.¹³

Such was Napoleon's outside life. Alone in his tent, another man would have sought well-earned repose, but he did not do so ; he began his examination of reports from all parts of his Empire, and minute calculations respecting the position of the army.

'The Emperor required,' says Mollien,¹⁴ 'that the accounts of the Treasury, which served as the basis of the credits he opened monthly to each Minister, should follow him even to his Headquarters. There, alone in his tent, he examined these accounts, added them up, modified my proposals and those of other Ministers, as if he had had nothing else to think of. From the middle of his camp, and amid important military operations, he would not only govern but manage France, and he succeeded.'

As for the army returns, which covered some hundreds of thousands of men, they were always an amusement and relaxation to the Emperor. He examined them so carefully that he asked why 'fifteen gendarmes remained unarmed in the island of Walcheren,'¹⁵ 'why only two guns were

¹³ Captain Coignet, '*Cahiers*,' p. 241.

¹⁴ '*Mémoires*,' t. ii., p. 75.

¹⁵ '*Correspondence of Napoleon I.*,' t. xxii., p. 159, No. 17,727, May 16, 1811.

mentioned at Ostend, when there were four there.¹⁶ He knew them by heart, so that he could direct some soldiers who had lost their way in going to join their regiment, simply by seeing the number on their tunics.¹⁷

He remembered, in 1813, that three years previously he had sent two squadrons of the 20th regiment of *chasseurs à cheval* into Spain.¹⁸

‘It must have been observed,’ he wrote to Berthier, ‘that I read these returns with as much pleasure as if they were good literature.’¹⁹

From Finkenstein, in a moment of enthusiasm, he writes to General Lacuée :

‘I have received and read with great interest your return A, showing the situation since the enlistment of the conscripts of 1808. It is so well drawn up that it reads like a fine piece of poetry.’²⁰

His predilection for literature of this kind is proved by fresh congratulations to the same General :

‘I have read with the greatest interest the splendid return you have sent me upon the Army of Naples. It appears to me perfect in its clear-

¹⁶ De Ségur, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 231.

¹⁷ Comte de Lavalette, ‘Mémoires et Souvenirs,’ t. i., p. 35.

¹⁸ Parquin, ‘Souvenirs et Campagnes d’un Vieux Soldat de l’Empire,’ p. 312.

¹⁹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. ix., p. 349, No. 7,727, April 28, 1804.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 254, No. 12,619, May 21, 1807.

ness. I read it with as much pleasure as a good novel.'²¹

It has been frequently remarked in this study that great position had no influence upon the character of Napoleon, and that he is always to be found faithful to his habits, whatever they might be. We must call attention to it once more when we find Bonaparte, Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Italy, indulging in the same recreations as the Emperor Napoleon. In 1797 he wrote to the Directory :

‘ I employ my leisure moments in studying the incurable wounds in the administration of the Army of Italy.’²²

We might go still further back, and remind our readers that the artillery officer, when off duty, utilized his spare time in completing his education and writing historical works.

²¹ ‘ Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xviii., p. 6, No. 14,390, October 21, 1808.

²² *Ibid.*, t. ii., p. 228, No. 1,363, January 6, 1797.

VII.

Military and Civil Duties—Ministerial Councils—Fabulous Activity—Austerlitz—Jéna and the Museum—Entry into Berlin—The War in Poland—Eylau—Friedland—Tilsit—Negotiations at Bayonne—The War in Spain—The Russian Campaign—Reverses.

It would be a mistake to imagine that the care of the army, basis of his personal renown, occupied all Napoleon's thoughts, or that the preparations for his warlike triumphs absorbed all his faculties to the exclusion of other subjects.

Undoubtedly the Emperor was devoted to military matters, delighted to polish and adjust all the parts composing the instrument of war, upon which he played with so much confidence and good-fortune. But this passion, although it appears to have been the main thought of his life, did not really take up more place in his brain than the other services whereof he undertook the responsibility.

The civil duties attached to the Headship of the Government also became for him a business to which he gave himself up with as much zest and

self-denial as he did to military requirements. Among the multitude of acts which assisted in the raising of France, many were laws entailing dry discussions and special knowledge. It may be thought that Napoleon adopted these laws blindfolded.

‘To think that would be a mistake,’ says Roederer,¹ ‘from the decree changing the denominations of weights and measures, up to the law organizing the Courts of Justice, he discussed everything, and very often threw light upon everything. Indefatigable in work, assiduous at the Council of State, presiding at meetings for five or six hours consecutively, he applied to every subject the weight of his talent before applying to it the authority of his position. He established free and familiar debate in the Council of State, which was exempt from the inconvenience attaching to set speeches from the tribune.’

‘Napoleon worked,’ says Mollien,² ‘for ten or twelve hours daily either at Departmental Committees or at the Council of State, when every detail of the new laws necessary to complete our imperfect legislation was discussed in his presence. He strengthened the army by numerous recruits, inspected and reviewed every division; he increased his artillery, always his favourite branch

¹ ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., pp. 381, 390.

² *Ibid.*, t. i., pp. 378, 379.

of the service ; he examined the plans of fortresses, ordered the works necessary to their completion, regulated himself the contracts for weapons, uniforms, provisions, and purchase of horses ; he demanded accounts of every detail from each Minister, even addressing himself to the head clerks when the Ministers themselves could not answer his questions satisfactorily. It was not uncommon to see Ministers leaving the Council half dead with fatigue after the examinations they had had to undergo ; while Napoleon, who would never condescend to notice it, would only speak of his day's work as a pleasant recreation that had just exercised his wits. I repeat, too, that it often happened that those Ministers, on returning home or to their offices, would find ten letters from the First Consul requiring immediate answers, for which half the night would barely suffice.'

In the Civil Service, as well as in the army, no nomination, no promotion, was signed until he had satisfied himself as to the merits of the candidate.

'When the documents,' says the Duke of Bassano,³ 'had been submitted to the Secretary of State, and were sent to the Emperor for his signature, he would leave them on his writing-table and only sign the following day. This was his constant habit. The examination of these papers formed a special part of his work. *To*

³ 'Souvenirs,' t. ii., p. 132.

each name, without exception, there was a note in his handwriting. Here are some of his annotations, copied exactly: "Granted," "Impossible," "For what reason?" "How many wounds?" "At the first battle if possible," "Years of service, if only ordinary service, do not constitute a right," "We will see later," "Not one action of importance." When he returned the documents thus annotated, Napoleon would discuss his reasons. If the Minister insisted in favour of an individual, Napoleon sent for his record. Sometimes he went back upon his original decision, but that was rare. His prodigious memory served him so well that he could almost tell exactly what share of merit should be given to each person.'

The Duke of Bassano quotes the case of a captain on whose behalf three applications were made at intervals of several months, and each time rejected by the Emperor.

This intense devotion to work, without pause or cessation, this determination to penetrate to the very heart of things, never abated for a moment. His activity, already startling, becomes, we may almost say, superhuman, when one follows him in his campaigns across Europe. One sees, with perplexity and wonder, the Emperor, even in the days which immediately preceded or followed the principal epochs of the Imperial reign, find not

only freedom of mind but actual time to bestow on the examination and direction of questions relatively the most trifling, and to the execution of plans and the drawing up of treaties on which the glory and the safety of the Empire depended.

In 1805 Napoleon had to hold his own against the third Coalition, composed of the Austrian and Russian armies. In order to deceive his enemies, the Emperor had formed the bold plan of simulating a retreat of his army. The execution of this design needed the utmost skill and tact, for the movements had to be so conducted as to deceive the enemy, and care had to be taken to avoid any indiscretion. Napoleon kept his intention secret, which increased tenfold the difficulties of its execution, because he was obliged to give his Ministers instructions contrary to his real object. On November 23 he wrote to Talleyrand :

‘I am not going to delay my march to Vienna, having decided to give a rest to my troops, who are in sore need of it.’⁴

At the same moment Napoleon was forming completely opposite intentions, so well thought out that, a few days later, on the very eve of the battle, he was able to announce publicly to his troops the manœuvres that would be performed next day, not only by the French, but also by

⁴ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xi., p. 432, No. 9,519, November 23, 1805.

the Russians and Austrians. One is tempted to believe that the Emperor was in command of both the belligerent armies when one hears him state :

‘The positions that we occupy are formidable ; while they march to turn my right, they will present their flank to me.’⁵

Next day the enemy, fighting under the eyes of the Emperors of Russia and Austria, were routed, leaving in the hands of the French ‘forty flags, the standards of the Russian Imperial Guard, 120 guns, twenty Generals, and more than 30,000 prisoners.’⁶

On November 21 Napoleon had visited and inspected the ground that he had selected as the battle-field of Austerlitz.⁷ On the following day, in the fever of the excitement caused by undertakings of such a nature, he was calm enough to write to the Minister of Finance in the off-hand tone of a man who had nothing on his mind but the management of money matters in Paris :

‘You are not serious in asking my approval of the steps you have taken with respect to Monsieur Vanlenberghe ? You know that it has always been against my principles, even in times of peace, to make advances to contractors, and

⁵ Order to the Army, December 1, 1805.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Austerlitz, December 3, 1805.

⁷ A. M. Perrot, ‘Itinéraire Général de Napoléon, p. 245.

it is strange that you should ask me to give 26,000,000 francs (£1,040,000) to a man to whom I do not owe them, who at one time did his work very well, but who latterly has done it very badly. I should lose my money and not save the man. One Minister said it would be better to give 100,000,000 francs (£4,000,000) to Vanlenberghe than let him fail. Permit me to say that that proposal might have emanated from a lunatic asylum ; probably that Minister does not understand figures, and does not know what 100,000,000 francs means.⁸

It was after this immortal day of Austerlitz that the Emperor of Austria came in person to the tent of Napoleon, to sue for the peace which brought to France 4,000,000 of inhabitants and large sums of money. (Peace of Presburg, December 26, 1805.)

In the following year, 1806, the campaign of Prussia began. Only four days before his departure from Paris for the army, we find the following instance as one of the matters on Napoleon's mind :

‘Ask Monsieur Denon whether it be true that entrance to the Museum was postponed yesterday, and that inconvenience was thereby caused to the

⁸ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xi, p. 429, No. 9,515, November 22, 1805.

public. Nothing could have been more opposed to my wishes.⁹

Twenty-five days later was fought the battle of Jéna, which gave into the hands of the French 200 pieces of artillery, thirty flags, and 28,000 prisoners, last remains of the dispersed Prussian army.

After the victory Napoleon spent three days at the royal castle of Sans-Souci at Potsdam. It was not without legitimate pride that he went to visit the tomb of Frederick the Great, the very spot where, less than a year previously, the Emperor of Russia and the King and Queen of Prussia had sworn, by solemn oath, to exterminate the French army.¹⁰

What a world of thoughts must have overwhelmed the erstwhile soldier of fortune—to-day the invincible conqueror—while holding in his grasp the sword of that great King, the magic of whose name, so short a while since, had been invoked to arouse the wrath of his people against France!

Amid all the thoughts that must have assailed Napoleon at such a moment, we find him still faithful to his daily habits.

⁹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xiii., p. 241, No. 10,848, September 21, 1806.

¹⁰ 18th Bulletin of the Grand Army, Potsdam, October 25, 1806.

The very day before his entry into the capital of Prussia, the Emperor regulated the little expenses proposed by his Ministers in Paris.

‘I send you,’ he writes to Fouché, ‘my approval of the expenses for the staging and production of the ballet, “The Return of Ulysses.” Have a detailed account of this ballet given to you, and go and see the first performance, so as to satisfy yourself that there is nothing bad in it, you will understand in what sense. The subject seems to me a fine one; I gave it to Gardel.’¹¹

In 1807, during the war in Poland, where each day produced its new battle, he wrote to Monsieur de Champagny :

‘We must have an Exchange (*Bourse*) in Paris. It is my intention to build one which shall correspond to the splendour of the Capital and to the great amount of business that shall one day be carried on there. Suggest to me a suitable situation. It must be vast, so as to have walks round it. It must stand by itself.’¹²

About the same time Cambacérès received the following note :

¹¹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.’ t. xiii., p. 412, No. 11,079, October 25, 1806.

¹² *Ibid.*, t. xiv., p. 68, No. 11,445, December 12, 1806.

‘I have your letter of December 6. Begin the works for the Odéon Theatre.’

In connection with this subject, may we point out here that one of the commonest mistakes, repeated frequently in our own days, consists in the statement that the famous Moscow decree, relating to the reorganization of the Comédie Française, was only dictated from that town in order to blind Europe as to the real condition of the Emperor’s mind?

As against this supposition, it will be noticed that the two foregoing letters, mentioning the Odéon and the Exchange, as well as that in which the Emperor shows himself to us as a writer of ballets, were written after a series of victories; that is to say, at a moment when he had no need to advertise a factitious serenity. We think, therefore, that there was no more premeditation in Moscow in 1812 than there was in Berlin in 1806, and that in each case Napoleon was simply acting in obedience to his natural tendency.

After the battle of Eylau the Emperor writes to the Minister of the Interior:

‘I have just placed 1,600,000 francs (£64,000) at the disposal of Monsieur Daru to be spent in the following manner: 1,400,000 (£56,000) to the manufacturers of Lyons, 50,000 (£2,000) to the glass manufacturers, and 150,000 (£6,000) to the locksmiths.

‘The method which seems to me most likely to be beneficial to these manufacturers is to take them on consignment. I have recommended this course to the Council of State, but they may be years without understanding it. Let us get on . . . for instance, I will suppose that Oberkampf has a million of goods manufactured which he is not able to sell, so that his manufactory is now standing idle. You lend him 150,000 francs, for which he puts 300,000 francs’ worth of goods in a warehouse under your control. The consequence of this advance will be that his business will begin to look up.’¹³

From Finkenstein, where he was preparing the campaign which should give the *coup de grace* to Russia, already adopting a menacing position towards France, the Emperor wrote to Fouché, in 1807, respecting an actress who fell from an arch during a performance :

‘All these Opera intrigues are absurd. The affair of Mademoiselle Aubry is an accident which might have happened to the most skilful of mechanists. Cannot they understand that it is easy enough to move the machines at the Opera? The actresses ascend to the clouds, or do not ascend. . . . I shall see what I can do when I am in Paris, but they push indecency too far.

¹³ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xiv., p. 549, No. 12,187, March 27, 1807.

Speak to someone who has authority to put a stop to this.¹⁴

And with the same pen, on the same day, the Emperor gave the longest and most minute instructions relative to sending an embassy to Persia with the object of forming an alliance with that Power; just as he gave all the orders and regulations for the siege of Dantzic, not omitting instructions as to artillery ranges.¹⁵

Two months later, by the defeat of the Russian army at Friedland, Napoleon had decided the fate of the fourth Coalition, all the Sovereigns allied against France having been beaten one after the other.

The results of that great day were most important. The Emperor found himself in a position to reshape at his will the map of Europe. In the creation of kingdoms, in the obliteration of the frontiers of those that already existed, in the reduction of some for the aggrandisement of others, there was surely enough work to occupy the whole attention of the conqueror. The treaty of Tilsit furnishes abundant proof that Napoleon had formed beforehand very distinct ideas upon the subject of the repartition of Europe, which he was about to impose

¹⁴ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xv., p. 57, No. 12,351, April 12, 1807.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 57, No. 12,351, April 12, 1807.

upon the areopagus of Sovereigns who, for the time being, were his courtiers.

Only eleven days, during which the French army took Königsberg and Insterburg, elapsed between the day of Friedland and the interview at Tilsit, when the Emperor of Russia came to treat with Napoleon. During that interval we find Napoleon's attention still as keen as ever to the internal management of his dominions.

The very day after the battle of Friedland, before the Emperor had even received a return of the trophies of victory, he was considering the form and site for a statue to be erected to the memory of the Bishop of Vannes.

'It will be best,' he decided, 'to have the statue in pontifical robes, mitre on head and crozier in hand, and to place it on a pedestal. It is unnecessary to throw it open to competition. The Minister will choose the sculptor whom he considers most capable of doing the work well and quickly. On the pedestal a Latin inscription, in prose or verse, is to be engraved.'¹⁶

On June 20 he sent three notes to three different Ministers :

To Cambacérès : 'You must try to finish the Commercial Code so that it may be presented complete at the first session of the *Corps Législatif*.'

¹⁶ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xv., p. 336, No. 12,759, June 15, 1807.

To the Minister of Finance: 'I am sorry to see that the new Code of Procedure will reduce our receipts from registration.'

To Fouché: 'Flachat is in Lyons under a feigned name, where, it appears, he is opening a shop for smuggled goods, to dupe honest citizens. Is this scoundrel always to find protectors, and to be able to defy the law?'¹⁷

And later: 'I have seen with pleasure the amalgamation of the two papers, *Le Courrier Français* and *Le Courrier des Spectacles*. If it is M. Legouvé who has charge of the new journal, he cannot fail to edit it in a good spirit.'¹⁸

Five days later a spectacle of unwonted magnificence was offered to the eyes of the Russian and French armies drawn up on either bank of the Niemen. Alexander and Napoleon met on a raft moored in mid-stream, and the two Sovereigns embraced each other amid the frenzied cheering of the two armies. The Emperors then withdrew to Tilsit, where Napoleon, supreme arbiter, was to parcel out the Continent according to his goodwill and pleasure.

The solemnity of this interview did not prevent Napoleon from noticing certain details in the equipment of his army. He had scarcely returned

¹⁷ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I,' t. xv., p. 350, Nos. 12,776—12,778, June 20, 1807.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, t. xv., p. 350, No. 12,778, June 20, 1807.

to Tilsit, when he wrote to Dejean, Minister for War :

‘I am extremely dissatisfied with the white tunics. It is my wish that my troops should continue to be dressed in blue. You will give orders that all work should in future be executed in blue cloth, which is a great deal better.’¹⁹

At Bayonne, in 1808, the Emperor had embarked upon the difficult and tortuous negotiations whereby he intended to force the King of Spain to abdicate. Never had a bolder, or perhaps rasher, plan taken root in the brain of man. Yet here is an extract from a letter to Marshal Bessières :

‘The Grand-Duke of Berg informs me that a deputation from the Council of Castille is on its way to Bayonne. If it stops at Burgos, treat its members well and give them good dinners.’²⁰

In this trait one sees again, absolutely unchanged, the ex-General-in-Chief of the Army of Egypt who, in 1798, ordered that the coffee²¹ which he proposed to offer to the notabilities of Cairo, assembled for the first time by his order, should be ‘strong and carefully made.’ That was an important event : to gather together the

¹⁹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xv., p. 373, No. 12,830, June 26, 1807.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, t. xvii., p. 187, No. 13,966, May 22, 1808.

²¹ *Ibid.*, t. v., p. 28, No. 3,414, October 30, 1798.

vanquished with a view to inducing them to accept foreign domination; to argue with and convince people of manners, religion, and language so different from our own—such was the problem whose general terms demanded sufficiently serious study to dispense Napoleon from looking after accessory details.

No less surprising is the letter from Napoleon to his Ambassador at Petersburg in 1807. It was necessary at that time to bring over to sympathy with the French those who were immediately about the Czar, to whom General Savary had been sent as Ambassador. The latter sought to gain the favour of the Russian ladies whom Alexander honoured with special notice, and with that object asked that a number of pretty trinkets and trifles which were supposed to have insuperable attractions for female vanity might be sent from Paris.

‘I did not know you were so gallant as you have become,’ answered the Emperor. ‘The presents for your Russian beauties have been sent. I will look after the cost of them. In offering them, you must say that I chanced to open the despatch in which you applied for them, and that I undertook the choice of them myself. You are aware that I am very knowing in matters of dress.’²²

²² ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xvi., p. 54, No. 13, 194, September 28, 1807.

One sees that neither the multiplicity nor the importance of his cares and pursuits, nor his own changed position, was able in the smallest degree to weaken Napoleon's rooted habit of always stepping back in order to survey his designs from top to bottom with one glance.

In place of the magnificent triumphs that he had reaped in preceding wars, the Emperor only met in Spain with useless and barren successes. The whole of Europe had its attention concentrated upon this first mistake, and watched its opportunity for coalescing once more against France, and avenging previous humiliations.

The grave anxieties caused by this critical situation altered in nothing Napoleon's daily habits. He wrote to Cretet from Burgos :

'The hospitals at Parma and Piacenza need special reorganization. Obtain a detailed statement, and submit to me what should be done.'²³

A week before his entry into Madrid, the Emperor says in a letter to Cambacérès :

'I am shocked and indignant at all that I hear about Lafarge's bank. I desire that before a week has passed the Council of State shall have decided the matter, and that justice should be done to these hundred thousand shareholders.'²⁴

²³ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xviii., p. 73, No. 14,495, November 20, 1808.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, t. xviii., p. 79, No. 14,511, November 20, 1808.

From Madrid he writes to the same Minister :

‘Does the water from the Canal de l’Ourcq as yet flow from the Fountain of the Innocents in Paris? From what I see in the newspapers, you have laid the foundation-stone of the first slaughter-house. I suppose that the works at the Madeleine are going on well? I still attach the greatest importance to the covered winter promenade for Paris.’

This letter was only a résumé of one written a short time before to Cretet, Minister of the Interior, wherein the Emperor said :

‘Send me a short report about the works I have ordered. How is the *Bourse* getting on? Is the convent of the *Filles - Saint - Thomas* destroyed yet? Is the building rising? What is being done at the Arc de Triomphe? The new wine depot, the new granaries, and the Madeleine, are they all making progress? Shall I drive over the bridge of Jéna on my return?’²⁵

The sight of the embarrassments caused to France by the unfortunate war with Spain soon decided Austria to take the offensive. Napoleon flung himself on his enemy with a terrible swift-ness, which partakes of the marvellous when we consider what were the means of communication at that time. On April 13, 1809, we see the

²⁵ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xvii., p. 256, No. 14,044, June 2, 1808.

Emperor again in Paris, and ten days later he is wounded at Ratisbon, after having already won the battle of Eckmühl.

An armistice, the prelude to the peace of Vienna, was signed after the memorable victories of Wagram and of Znaim. Next day the Emperor is already plunged anew in considerations the very opposite to those which devolved upon him through this zenith of his fame and greatness. To Cambacérès he writes :

‘It is necessary that the Council of State should formulate a law which will keep the stock-brokers in check. They spread the most injurious reports, and that not from malice, but merely in order to speculate on the rise and fall. It is imperative that this playing at stock-jobbing, so dangerous to public tranquillity, should be put a stop to.’²⁶

Immediately after the signature of the treaty of Vienna, the very day of his return to Fontainebleau, without waiting to receive the congratulations of the Court upon the successful termination of the campaign, Napoleon wrote to the Minister of the Interior :

‘In the faubourgs of Saint-Denis and Saint Martin, there are three pumps without water. The inhabitants of these faubourgs think it is

²⁶ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xix., p. 241, No. 15,520, July 14, 1809.

owing to carelessness. Send me a report upon the matter.²⁷

On the way to Moscow, in 1812, Napoleon had to supply the wants of an army of several hundred thousand men, the largest in point of numbers that ever leader had to command, and the most difficult to manage, as it was composed of men of nine different nationalities ; it was a babel not only of tongues, but of drills.

It was an arduous and daily problem to feed this mass of men at a distance of some hundreds of leagues from the provisioning centre, in a country, moreover, deliberately laid waste by the enemy. But, as if that question were not sufficient for Napoleon's ceaseless activity, we find him occupied with the price of corn—not in Poland, where he then was, but in the Department of Calvados, and on this subject he writes as follows to the Minister of the Interior :

‘The tax of thirty-three francs the hectolitre, imposed by the Prefect of Caen upon corn, is very extraordinary. The best plan, in my opinion, would be for the municipality of Caen to bring corn from the Department of the Roer.’²⁸

After the greatest reverses we find Napoleon armed with the same courage, the same energy,

²⁷ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxi., p. 230, No. 17,064, October 17, 1810.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, t. xxiii., p. 451, No. 18,743, June 1, 1812.

the same fever of work, as in the grandest days of his success.

On November 2, 1813, he entered Mayence at the head of the conquered but immortal men who had fought at Leipsic and Hanau, and the next day, the 3rd, 'the Emperor,' says the Duke of Bassano, 'set foot in the courtyard of the Tuileries. He covered the ground between Mayence and Paris with terrible speed, without stopping. When he got out of his carriage, his legs were so stiff that they could not support him; his drawn features revealed his exhaustion and fatigue. Nevertheless, he only snatched a moment to go and embrace his wife and child, and the rest of the night was passed in questioning his Ministers assembled around him, in taking notes, and drawing up orders. At six o'clock in the morning only did the Emperor dismiss them, and then he desired the Minister of Finance to return at noon.

'Bring the Treasury returns with you, Gaudin,' he said. 'We have a heavy task before us, and must do it together.'²⁹

It was during these days that his secretary said to Count Lavalette :

'The Emperor goes to bed at eleven o'clock, but is up again at three, and from that time till night there is not a moment during which he is

²⁹ Duke of Bassano, '*Souvenirs Intimes*,' part i., t. ii., p. 139.

not at work. It cannot go on much longer ; he will break down, and I before him.'³⁰

The man, as we see, was unvarying in his habits. Whether he were making a triumphant entry into a hostile capital, or returning humiliated to his own palace after a defeat, his first idea was always to do the work that awaited him.

Neither the mental depression which weighs down the best disciplined spirit, nor the physical fatigue which oppresses the most toil-hardened frame, had any effect on his brave determination to apply himself, at once and in every case, to the work he had to do.

Everything which, in his opinion, could contribute to advance his enterprises was devoted to them. After the sacrifice of his person he willingly made that of his self-love, which often costs more. What imported to him, when looking to the success of his plans, prejudices which might tend to restrict his action ? He had no care to preserve his dignity ; he would take any step, regular or irregular, that he thought useful. No one can say of the Emperor that '*sa grandeur l'attachait au rivage*' ; absolute master, having but to punish if his orders were not punctually carried out, he never hesitated to compromise in order to obtain the co-operation he desired.

In 1814 it happened that Augereau showed

³⁰ Comte de Lavalette, '*Mémoires et Souvenirs*,' t. ii., p. 75.

some weakness in his command. The Emperor wrote to King Joseph :

‘ I have written to the Duke of Castiglione. I have told the Empress to speak to his wife. I think you had better speak to him also, and make the ladies-in-waiting speak to him. He must do as I do, and maintain his reputation.’³¹

Will it be supposed that this position was accidental, and only to be explained by the state of despair into which Napoleon was plunged during the last hours of his struggle against the invasion of France? and will it be imagined that, under other circumstances, he would not have laughed at the idea of employing female influence, which could only diminish his reputation?

Such a supposition would be a mistaken one. At the height of his splendour, only a few days after his consecration as King of Italy, he condescended to ask for the intervention of the wife of an officer in the interests of the service.

‘ I believe,’ he wrote to the Minister of Marine, ‘ that Madame Missiessy is a sensible woman, with some ambition. Ask her to start for Rochefort. It is right that Admiral Missiessy should see his wife, and let her make him understand that it is his duty to go through the campaign.’³²

³¹ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxvii., p. 223, No. 21,356, February 23, 1814.

³² *Ibid.*, t. x., p. 483, No. 8,846, June 6, 1805.

VIII.

Grumblers on the Staff—Apathy of the Marshals—The Emperor's Generosity—Complaints of the Generals.

SEEING the Emperor entreating on occasions when he might have punished and commanded, how can we adopt the conclusion thus formulated:

'What an intolerable restraint he exercises, how heavily does his arbitrary will weigh upon the most tried devotions, to what a degree does he trample upon every attempt at independence, how he represses and stifles every human breath'?'¹

On the contrary, that was the great want in Napoleon's character as a leader, and was the efficient, if not the fundamental, cause of his greatest reverses, that he had not the courage to repress roughly the underhand or open resistance of those whom he had sated with wealth and honours, and whom he had neither crushed nor stifled.

¹ H. Taine, 'Les Origines de la France Contemporaine,' 'Le Régime Moderne,' t. i., pp. 88, 89.

What he was towards his brothers, towards Talleyrand, Bourrienne, and Fouché, he was towards his Generals. He who had arrogated to himself the right of raising others from the lowest positions to supreme heights could never make up his mind to overthrow them again, even when the good of the service or his own personal advantage demanded it.

Habitual attachment, remembrance of past services, fear of causing the pain which he had himself felt so acutely when beginning life, were probably the feelings which combined to mollify the severity of Napoleon.

‘The only reproach that can be brought against the Emperor,’ says the Duke of Rovigo,² ‘is that he was good-natured, even to weakness, towards men who only hungered after his favours.’

It is no secret that even long before the Russian campaign the Marshals and Generals, enriched, ennobled, loaded with every favour that human vanity could desire, had become grumblers. (One desire animated them all, to live quietly on the benefits, on the millions of revenue, that the Emperor’s bounty had given them.)

For the certainty of these facts we may trust the opinion of an enemy who would certainly not have invented them for the mere pleasure of minimizing the merits of Napoleon’s conquerors.

² ‘Mémoires,’ t. vi., p. 247.

'These men,' said Metternich in 1809,³ 'most of whom had risen from the lowest ranks in the army, had reached the summit of military distinction. Gorged with booty, enriched by the calculated generosity of the Emperor, they desired to enjoy the splendid position they had reached. Napoleon had assured them a magnificent existence. The Prince of Neufchâtel, Berthier, had a yearly income of more than 1,200,000 francs (£48,000); Marshal Davoût had amassed a fortune that represented more than 1,000,000 francs a year (£40,000); Masséna, Augereau, and many other Marshals and Generals, were in an equally good position. Marshal Ney himself told me that the different endowments he had received in Italy and Poland, added to those just granted him in Westphalia and Hanover, amounted to 500,000 livres a years (£31,250).⁴ Besides this, his pay, the Legion of Honour, and what he received from the Treasury on various accounts, amounted to another 300,000 francs (£12,000). He assured me that his income was far below the maximum granted to several of his colleagues.'

'Masséna,' says Marbot,⁵ 'enjoyed a colossal

³ 'Mémoires,' t. i., pp. 68, 299.

⁴ In calculating livres I have adopted the old standard of sixteen to £1.—*Translator*.

⁵ 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 303.

fortune : 200,000 francs as head of the army, 200,000 as Duke of Rivoli, and 500,000 as Prince of Essling—total, 900,000 francs a year (£36,000).'

'I am thirty-three years of age,' said, about this time, General Lassalle to Roederer; 'I am a General of Division. Do you know that the Emperor gave me last year an income of 50,000 livres (£3,125)? It is immense.'⁶

Napoleon frequently gave away large sums in the most delicate manner.

'The Emperor has given me 600,000 francs (£24,000),' writes Davoût to his wife, 'of which 300,000 are to be added to the other benefits I have received from his Majesty, and form part of the freehold that the Emperor also intends to give me. I am to warn you not to speak of these new proofs of our Emperor's bounty to anyone soever; it is upon that condition that he gives them to me. Though he loads me with benefits, he wishes them ignored. Therefore do not mention it to anybody, not even your own people.'⁷

Among other documents, one single deed may be consulted, whereby, in 1807, the Emperor made a present to Berthier of 1,000,000 francs

⁶ Roederer, '*Mémoires*,' t. iii., p. 557.

⁷ '*Correspondance du Maréchal Davoût; Années de Commandement*,' p. 404.

(£40,000), of 600,000 francs apiece (£24,000) to four Marshals, of 400,000 francs each (£16,000) to five others, and 200,000 francs (£8,000) to each of twenty-six Generals mentioned by name.⁸

‘These men,’ says Metternich, ‘wished to enjoy their fortunes, and did not see the use of risking their lives and property daily amid the vicissitudes of war.’

‘If the Emperor,’ says Marbot,⁹ ‘had desired to punish all those who failed in zeal, he would have had to renounce the services of nearly all his Marshals.’

Thus, then, instead of the instinctive obedience, the spontaneous enthusiasm, which achieve victory, the Emperor saw around him only indolence and inertia, if not actual insubordination. Had these great dignitaries at least the excuse of finding that the public good coincided with their personal inclinations? It is doubtful, because they were not in a position to know what was best in the interest of the public.

A Sovereign, head of the army, does not walk about with his own plans and diplomatic despatches relating to the intentions of the enemy fastened to his hat. Whence, then, could these

⁸ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.’ t. xvi., p. 45, No. 13,177, September 23, 1807.

⁹ ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 281.

Generals have gathered any knowledge of what was necessary for the public weal? If, in order to make them wise advisers, it was enough that they should judge superficially according to the restricted horizon which bounded their bivouacs, how was it that in former campaigns none of them had ventured to remonstrate with that chief who distributed so generously to his companions in glory, under the form of endowments, lands securing to them the fortune they so ardently coveted? At that time unselfishness, enlightened by patriotism, might have justly dictated some respectful suggestions to comrades anxious not to become mere courtiers. They might then have put useful limits to a course to which, on the contrary, they gave way with eager servility. They might then have made Napoleon see that these territories bestowed on them, and which had been wrested by main force from the vanquished, represented to the latter cruel extortions, and would become in the future humiliations to be avenged and losses to be recovered.

Eager and greedy accomplices in spoliation, they ought to have known that in order to keep their gains they must defend them. And they must indeed have been blind not to see that it was the forward thrust, not the sword in the scabbard, to which they were compelled while

awaiting the ratification by time of the conquests of the Empire, conquests always uncertain during the existence of the generation which had suffered by them, and which retaliated by means of coalitions incessantly renewed.

Various and futile attempts have been made to extenuate the guilt of these officers, by pretending that they were glad of an opportunity to avenge themselves for the selfishness displayed towards them by the Emperor, and that they were tired of gathering laurels for the brows of another. According to them, Napoleon, jealous of glory, purposely omitted to mention their eminent services in drawing up the accounts of his victories. It is, however, an unchanging law that every man who takes part in a successful action exaggerates the importance of his share in the victory, while when a check comes everyone immediately shelters himself behind the responsibility of the leader.

Authentic documents shall answer.

The first answer to these recriminations comes from the pen of Marmont, the most guilty of all, the man who, in 1814, forgot his military duty, the laws of gratitude, and the bonds of friendship of twenty years' standing. In the memoirs of this Marshal we find that Napoleon never sought to diminish the merits of his lieutenants, even at the moment when he might have had something

to gain by so doing, and when he himself still had his own way to make.

‘In 1797,’ Marmont relates,¹⁰ ‘Dessolès’ (then employed by the General, Head of the Staff, and who afterwards became notorious by the important part he played as War Minister under the Restoration) ‘was charged by the Commander-in-Chief to carry the news of the armistice to Paris. A few days later Masséna carried the preliminaries of peace. Bonaparte, in acting thus, did a thing agreeable to his Generals ; but, as I have already stated, his chief object was to bring before the Parisians his principal lieutenants, those whose names had been mentioned with the most distinction, so that they should be enabled to judge them.’

While seizing every opportunity of sending them to Paris, could Napoleon do more for his subordinates than write, for example, to the Government ;

‘General Berthier, whose distinguished talents are only equalled by his courage and patriotism, is one of the pillars of the Republic. The Army of Italy has not gained one victory to which he has not contributed. In retracing here the services he has done his country, my only fear is that my friendship for him may render me partial ; but history will remember what he has

¹⁰ ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., p. 276.

done, and the opinion of the whole army will be the basis of history's evidence' ?¹¹

'After the battle of Rivoli, I announced to you that we had taken twenty-one flags, and I only sent you fifteen or sixteen. I send you now by General Bernadotte the remaining ones, which had been accidentally left at Peschiera. This excellent officer is most essential to the glory of the Army of Italy.'¹²

'I send you, by one of the Generals who principally contributed to the success of our late campaign, the flag that the Convention presented to the Army of Italy. General Joubert received from nature the qualities that distinguish warriors. A grenadier by his courage, he is a General by his calmness and military talents.'¹³

Many others were sent to Paris by Bonaparte with letters of eulogium that attracted to them the favours of the Directory: Murat in 1796; Marmont in the same year, and again in 1797; Bessières, Augereau, Kellermann, Masséna, Sérurier, and Andréossy in 1797.

It will not be difficult to prove that the First Consul and the Emperor, who could have envied no one, was not more jealous of the fame won by

¹¹ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. iii., p. 390, No. 2,306, October 18, 1797.

¹² *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 226, No. 2,083, August 9, 1797.

¹³ *Ibid.*, t. iii., p. 447, No. 2,376, November 16, 1797.

other Generals than the young Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Italy, naturally desirous of increasing his dawning reputation.

‘No General,’ we read in a serious military study,¹⁴ ‘has ever understood how to excite emulation by distributing praise and blame with the same authority as Napoleon in his bulletins of the Grand Army. What would not his Generals or his regiments have attempted to gain such mentions as these?—“Colonel Mouton, of the 1st *chasseurs* has covered himself with glory;” “The 8th regiment of dragoons maintained its old reputation;” “The 16th and 22nd regiments of *chasseurs*, with their colonels, Latour-Maubourg and Durosnel, displayed the utmost intrepidity;” “The 4th and 9th regiments of light infantry and the 100th and 32nd of the line have covered themselves with glory;” “General Gazan displayed much valour.”’

‘The battle of Rivoli,’ said Napoleon in presence of all the officers of a division of dragoons, ‘was gained by Masséna, Joubert, Lassalle, and me.’¹⁵

Anyone who glances at the bulletins of the Grand Army will see that the Emperor lost no

¹⁴ The *Temps* of February 19, 1889: General Thomas, ‘La Vie Militaire.’

¹⁵ *Temps*, March 10, 1891: General Thomas, ‘La Vie Militaire.’

opportunity of bringing forward the good qualities of his subalterns. Now it is : ' Marshal Bessières, who led a splendid charge of four squadrons, which routed and overthrew the enemy.' Again we find : ' Marshal Ney, who was sent to take possession of the Tyrol, and who has acquitted himself of his task with his usual intelligence and courage.' Then : ' Lieutenant-General Gouvion-Saint-Cyr displayed great skill in his manœuvres.' ' General Saint-Hilaire, wounded at the commencement of the action, remained the whole day on the battle-field, and covered himself with glory.' Elsewhere we have : ' Marshal Davoût, who performed prodigies with his army corps. This Marshal displayed both distinguished bravery and strength of character, most important qualities in a soldier.'

Another time it is said that the same Marshal 'in his different engagements gave fresh proofs of the intrepidity which distinguishes him.' Then General Dupont (the future hero of the deplorable capitulation of Baylen) 'has earned much distinction,' and later is characterized as 'an officer of great merit.'

To Murat, Bernadotte, and Soult, the Emperor 'testifies his admiration for their brilliant conduct at Lubeck, and for the activity they exhibited in their pursuit of the enemy.'

Of General Lariboisière, Napoleon says that he is 'an officer of rare merit'; of Marshal Mortier that he 'gave proofs of self-possession and courage'; that 'Lannes and Masséna have shown to-day all their force of character.' And then the Emperor bestows a command on Oudinot, saying of him, 'He is a General whose valour has been proved in a hundred fights, where he has shown equal bravery and skill.'

It would be superfluous to reproduce here all the laudatory quotations whose authenticity is indisputable. But even did these not exist, would not the many titles borne to-day by descendants of Napoleon's Generals suffice to prove that he could do full justice to merit wherever he came upon it?

Beyond contradiction, the Emperor's chief fault lay in the fact that he exaggerated his gratitude towards those who served him. Indeed, the result of his excessive generosity was that he was made to realize in his own person the truth of these prophetic words written by Montesquieu of the Roman Empire :

'The majority of the conspirators had been loaded with benefits by the Emperor, and had obtained great advantages from his victories; but as their positions increased in brilliancy, so did

they in proportion seek to escape from misfortunes common to all. (Heap benefits upon a man, and the first idea with which you inspire him is to seek the best means of preserving them.)¹⁶

¹⁶ 'Grandeur et Décadence des Romains,' chaps. xi., xiii.

IX.

The Necessary Remedy—Generals in Favour of Peace—Berthier's Treachery—Macdonald's Impertinence—Defeats—Prodigies of 1814—The Abdication—Napoleon's Melancholy—Attempt at Suicide—Resignation.

As Metternich had noticed in 1809, Napoleon clearly saw the apathy of his lieutenants. At a dinner at Dantzic in 1812, he was heard to say in the presence of the very men of whom he was talking :

‘The King of Naples is unwilling to leave his fine kingdom. Berthier wants to hunt at Gros Bois, and Rapp to live in his superb house in Paris.’¹

As early as 1809, speaking of advantages which had been granted to Austria without his authorization, he said in the presence of Berthier and other Generals :

‘You fancy yourselves personages of great importance, gentlemen of the staff. I have made too much of you, and you are now making up to the noblemen at the Court of Austria.’²

¹ General Rapp, ‘Mémoires,’ p. 166.

² Mathieu Dumas, ‘Souvenirs,’ t. iii., p. 387.

On another occasion he said to the Duke of Vicenza :

‘Can you not see, Caulaincourt, what is going on here? The men whom I have loaded with kindness wish to enjoy themselves, and not to fight any more. They do not understand, poor reasoners as they are, that they must go on fighting in order to secure the repose for which they thirst. And I, have I not also a palace, a wife and child? Do I not wear out my body by fatigues of every kind? Do I not offer my life daily as a holocaust upon my country’s altars? They are ungrateful.’³

Napoleon was perfectly aware of the remedy necessary for this condition of things when he exclaimed :

‘It is only my poor soldiers, and those of my officers who are neither princes, nor dukes, nor counts, who will do a good day’s work for a day’s pay. It is terrible to have to say it, but it is the truth. Do you know what I ought to do? I ought to send all these grand mushroom lords home to sleep in their feather beds and swagger on their estates; I ought to get rid of these grumblers, and begin the war again with young blood and fresh courage.’⁴

Thus did this Sovereign express himself, who

³ Duke of Vicenza, ‘Souvenirs,’ part i., t. i., p. 186.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

has been accused of unbending autocracy, and who in reality hesitated at the idea of inflicting a humiliation upon his Generals by any attack upon their prerogatives. To send them back to their country houses seems to have been the maximum penalty he would inflict. It would not have been wonderful had this Chief talked of sending all his recalcitrant subordinates to be tried by court-martial.

These speeches on the part of the Emperor were not gratuitous suppositions, nor were they retrospective outbursts simply made in order to palliate the checks he had received. It is too true that his best friends tried to nullify his decisions and to enlighten the enemy, in order to put an end to wars of which they were tired.

In 1813, at Dresden, when the conferences for peace were in progress with Prince Metternich, it was obviously to Napoleon's interest to conceal his want of confidence in his army. Marshal Berthier undertook to enlighten the Austrian Ambassador :

‘It would be difficult,’ says Prince Metternich,⁵ ‘to describe the expression of grievous disquiet that was visible upon the faces of all these courtiers and Generals, resplendent in gold, who were assembled in the Emperor's apartments. Berthier, Prince of Neufchâtel, said to me in a low voice :

⁵ ‘Mémoires,’ t. i., pp. 147, 149.

“Do not forget that Europe wants peace, France especially. She only wants peace.”

‘I did not think myself called upon to reply, and passed on into the Emperor’s anteroom.’

Although he made no answer to Berthier, Metternich did not fail to profit by the hint.

Napoleon, in accordance with his *rôle*, spoke loudly and boldly of the imposing forces still at his disposal.

‘But it is just the army that wants peace,’ retorted the Austrian diplomat.

The Emperor, cut to the quick by this well-aimed blow, answered immediately :

‘No, it is not the army ; it is my Generals who want peace.’

As soon as the Marshals realized Napoleon’s weakness towards them, their boldness increased. As he was powerless to cut away at one blow the resistance that was growing up around him on every side, the Emperor began to make concessions. Thenceforward, being no longer at liberty to decide upon questions according to the dictates of his own genius, he thought it necessary to take the opinion of those who would be called upon to carry them out. From these consultations sprang, in the mind of Bonaparte, the indecision which is always fatal to the leader of an army.

During the war in Russia, when his orders had

been discussed and criticized, Napoleon took the fatal step of yielding to the wishes of his Generals.

‘He would have escaped great reverses,’ says Baron Fain, who gives General Gourgaud as his authority, ‘especially in the last days of his career, had he trusted to himself alone.’⁶

In 1813, under the pressure of his Marshals, he renounced the plan he had conceived of marching to Berlin, and was swallowed up in the disaster of Leipsic.⁷

His diminished authority became daily weaker, and he himself said to Marshal Macdonald :

‘I give orders and no one attends to them. I wished the waggons to assemble at one point with an escort of cavalry, and nobody has come to do it!’

We cannot feel the smallest doubt as to the disregard shown to the Emperor’s orders when we read that the Marshal dared to make this reply to his master’s painful acknowledgment :

‘I quite believe it, Sire ; many of them have both experience and judgment. They have rightly presumed that the road by which you wish them to communicate is closed to us.’⁸

⁶ Fain, ‘Manuscrit de 1812,’ t. ii., p. 255.

⁷ *Ibid.*, ‘Manuscrit de 1813,’ t. ii., p. 376 ; Duke of Vicenza, ‘Souvenirs,’ part i., t. i., p. 267.

⁸ Marshal Macdonald, ‘Recollections,’ English edition, vol. ii., pp. 93, 94.

Macdonald, with a clumsy affectation of bad taste, takes particular care to emphasize the disrespectful, almost indecent, tone that he adopted towards Napoleon in his dark days.

‘Having rejoined the Emperor,’ he says, ‘I spoke to him very urgently :

“You must force the passage, and send thither, without the loss of an instant, all the men at your disposal.”’

And he roughly animadverts upon the greatest warrior of the age by adding in an angry voice :

‘Why has not your Guard advanced ?’

The Marshal, with a candour which borders upon ignorance, declares that :

‘Those who were present at this interview stared at him, and displayed their astonishment at hearing, apparently for the first time, anyone address the Emperor with such freedom and outspokenness.’⁹ It is just, however, to add that Macdonald in the dark days of defeat fought more gamely in 1813-14 than any of the other Marshals (those in Spain excepted).

Under this command, which daily grew weaker, the army went from defeat to defeat in a retreat which brought behind them the enemy upon French soil.

When he saw his country invaded, the Emperor appears to have suddenly recovered himself. He

⁹ Macdonald, ‘Recollections,’ English edition, vol. ii., p. 90.

was resolved to put down any interference with his plans, and to dismiss, to chastise mercilessly, everyone who did not obey immediately. It is not the least honourable trait in his character that in adversity he showed himself more haughty than in the days of his triumph.

He had his full self-possession on the day when he took the command from Victor, and on the day when he wrote thus to Augereau :

‘If you are still the Augereau you were at Castiglione, keep the command ; if the weight of your sixty years tells upon you, give it up, and make it over to the senior among your general officers. Our country is threatened and in danger ; it can only be saved by courage and determination, and not by vain temporizing. Be in the fore-front of battle. We can no longer act as we have done of late ; we must put on our boots and our determination of ’93.’¹⁰

It is, indeed, the old Bonaparte who writes these vigorous and incisive letters which admit of no answer :

‘I see that you have 1,100 horses ready to start ! Why do they not start ? One would fancy you were asleep at Paris.’¹¹

¹⁰ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxvii., p. 24, No. 21,343, February 21, 1814.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, t. xxvii., p. 273, No. 21,415, to General Hulin, March 2, 1814.

‘I am not a character in an opera. One must be more practical than you are. It is both simpler and quicker to say that you cannot raise any men than to try to do so.’¹²

‘Write and tell General Digeon that I am extremely displeased with the manner in which he is commanding his artillery; that yesterday, at three in the afternoon, all his guns were without ammunition, not because it was all consumed, but because his stores were too far off. Tell him that an artillery officer who runs short of ammunition in the middle of a battle deserves death.’¹³

Under the impulse given by this reconquered energy, the army composed of a handful of men accomplished, in 1814, against all Europe coalesced against it, the most memorable feats of arms that any nation has ever been able to register in its history.

Crushed by numbers, driven back to Fontainebleau, where he was met by the final treason of Marmont, the friend of his youth, the Emperor, according to Coignet’s expression, ‘found himself beaten down by the men whom he had raised to the highest dignities, and who forced him to abdicate.’¹⁴

¹² ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxvii., p. 305, No. 21,467, to King Joseph, March 12, 1814.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 198, No. 21,301, February 19, 1814.

¹⁴ ‘Cahiers,’ p. 378.

Then was it given to Napoleon to know all the depths of baseness and perfidy of which the human heart is capable.

He who for fifteen years had been the glory of France, the worshipped idol of an entire nation, the giant of battles, who had held all Europe prisoner in the folds of the French flag, saw himself despised, insulted, mocked by the very men whose flattering zeal he had been formerly compelled to moderate!

The Marshals, careful above all to secure their position with the Bourbons, without a word of sympathy or pity for Napoleon, imperiously demanded his abdication.

‘We have had enough of this. . . . We don’t want any more compliments ; . . . the thing now is to come to a decision.’¹⁵

Such were the expressions used by Macdonald, who had been appointed the spokesman of his colleagues.

‘It is time to put an end to this,’ said Marshal Ney. ‘You may as well make your will ; you have lost the confidence of the army.’

And to the Emperor’s indignant answer, that the army would still obey him to the extent of punishing the Marshal’s insolence, Ney answered :

¹⁵ Macdonald, ‘Recollections,’ English edition, vol. ii., pp. 146-149.

‘If you were able to do that, should I be here now?’¹⁶

When the last of the Marshals had quitted his presence, Napoleon, revolted at the humiliations he had had to undergo, and disgusted at such cowardice, exclaimed :

‘Those men have neither heart nor entrails. I am conquered less by fortune than by the selfishness and ingratitude of my brothers-in-arms.’¹⁷

It was more than he could bear. The infamous desertion of those whom he had loved, whom he had loaded with riches and honours, gave the last blow to that soul in its depth of disillusion.

That same night, in a fit of despair, he resolved to put an end to his life. He swallowed a strong poison contained in a bag that he had worn round his neck since 1808, in order, no doubt, not to remain alive in the hands of his enemies should he be taken prisoner.

In spite of his efforts, he could not repress the cries caused by his sufferings, and the Palace was aroused.

At midnight Constant reached his master's bedside ; a prey to violent convulsions, the Emperor kept repeating in a broken voice :

‘Marmont has given me the finishing blow.

¹⁶ Duke of Vicenza, ‘Souvenirs,’ part i., t. ii., p. 76.

¹⁷ De Ségur, ‘Mémoires,’ t. vii., p. 153.

The wretch ! I loved him ! Berthier's abandonment has distressed me. My old friends, my old fellow-soldiers !¹⁸

Dr. Yvan, who was hastily summoned, obliged the Emperor to swallow an antidote. The violent crisis was succeeded by a calm, and he slept for half an hour.

'When Napoleon awoke,' says Caulaincourt, 'I drew nearer his bed. The servants retired, and we remained alone. His glassy and sunken eyes seemed to be trying to recognize the objects around him; a whole world of torture was revealed in his look of misery.

"God would not allow it," he said, as if talking to himself. "I could not die. Why did they not let me die? It is not the loss of my throne," he continued, "that makes existence insupportable to me. My military career is enough glory for one man. Do you know what is more difficult to bear than reverses of fortune? It is the baseness, the horrible ingratitude of men. I turned my head away with horror from the sight of their meanness, and their contemptible selfishness, and I am disgusted with life. What I have suffered during the last three weeks, no one can tell."¹⁹

From that moment, cheated by death itself,

¹⁸ Constant, '*Mémoires*,' t. vi., p. 76.

¹⁹ Duke of Vicenza, '*Souvenirs*,' part i., t. ii., p. 92.

which reserved him for a longer agony, an even more dramatic end, the Emperor became resigned to everything. He signed, without discussion, the preliminaries of the deed of abdication, anxious only to quit the place where he had suffered such bitterness and such insults.

X.

Journey from Fontainebleau to Elba—Insults and Threats of Death—Administration of the Island of Elba—Splendour and Poverty—Solitude—Embarkation for France—Violation of the Treaty of Fontainebleau—Removal to St. Helena proposed in 1814—Return from Elba—End of Napoleon's Career.

THE journey from Fontainebleau to the Island of Elba had fresh trials in store for Napoleon. He had to undergo one more insult from the man whom he had made Duke of Castiglione (Augereau);¹ the latter did not even take off the cap with which his ducal head was covered.

In Provence, the excited populace crowded round the carriage the Emperor occupied with the foreign Commissioners, and received him with abominable insults, such as: 'Corsican Ogre! Odious tyrant! Down with Nicholas!'²

The most excited hung on to the wheels of the

¹ Bourrienne, 'Mémoires,' t. x., p. 224.

² A nickname then applied to Napoleon.

carriage, while less bold spirits stood at a distance and hurled large stones. Threats of death succeeded to insults.

The danger became so alarming that, before reaching Saint-Cannat, where the effervescence was at its height, the Emperor was implored by those with him, who wished to prevent a dishonouring crime, to change clothes with, and take the place of, one of his postilions.³

What human being had ever to undergo such startling changes? At one time to have led armies across Europe, that trembled at his approach, and now to be reduced to ride, disguised as a postilion, in front of the carriage containing his own gaolers!

If any say that this disguise showed want of courage, let them ask themselves whether he can be accused of cowardice who, during the ten years of his reign, spent exactly fifty-four days less in camp and under the enemy's fire, to a certain extent, than he did in his royal residences; who personally commanded in 600 skirmishes and 85 pitched battles; who, when in 1813 he saw a bomb burst close to him, at Dresden, picked up the pieces, and, turning to some Italians who were shrinking together hard by, exclaimed:

³ General Sir Neil Campbell, English Commissioner, 'Journal,' p. 35.

*'Ah, coglioni, non fa male !'*⁴

Scarcely had he landed in Elba than he seemed, as though by a miracle, to recover from the depression of spirits which was but natural after such events, and he began to manage his tiny dominions with the same care as that which he had formerly given to his Empire.

He disembarked on May 3 at six o'clock in the evening; the next day, after receiving the authorities and notables, 'he mounted a horse and went to pay a first visit of inspection to the fortifications of Porto Ferrajo, and only returned to dinner at seven o'clock.' On the 5th 'he was up before daybreak, and went out on foot to visit the forts and magazines.' On the 6th, at seven in the morning, 'he crossed the harbour in a boat, then mounted a horse and rode as far as Rio to examine the mines.' On the 7th he spent 'from five in the morning till two in the afternoon inspecting the forts and magazines near the harbour,'⁵ and so on every day.

He re-established, in miniature, his Ministerial Council, and assembled, under his own Presidency, 'the Sub-prefect, the Commissioner of War, the Commissioner of the Navy, the Director of Taxes, and all persons,' says the summons, 'who can give

⁴ Major d'Odeleben, eye-witness, 'Récits,' t. i., p. 72; Fain, 'Manuscrit de 1813,' t. i., p. 380.

⁵ Sir Neil Campbell, 'Journal,' p. 63.

me information and explain to me the administration of the country, its custom-houses, rights, and sanitary and maritime condition.'⁶

From this moment his attention is riveted on the affairs of the Isle of Elba. He is just as minutely careful as in the time when he ruled over sixty millions of subjects. The man gives himself up unreservedly to the new duty which has devolved upon him.

The maintenance and management of his Guard, amounting to 715 men, 127 horses or mules, and 16 carriages, were the object of special classification under the heading of 'military affairs' and 'war budget,' which he controlled as minutely and economically as he had formerly the accounts of the Grand Army.⁷

The Emperor occupied himself no less seriously about civil matters. In place of the huge works that he formerly initiated, he now had bridges mended, and took steps to clear the roads. Though he has no Imperial palaces with large parks, he nevertheless puts guards to watch 'lest the goats should damage his property,' and in default of Crown furniture, having no longer to discuss the price of Gobelin tapestry and beautiful things, he writes to General Bertrand :

⁶ 'Correspondence of Napoleon I.,' t. xxvii., p. 365, No. 21,566, May 7, 1814.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Nos. 21,566, 21,631, May 7 and September 6, 1814.

‘We have no chairs in any of our houses. Please choose a chair of good pattern at about five francs (4s.), and some armchairs and sofas at a proportionate price, and order them at Pisa to the extent of 1,000 francs (£40).’⁸

Never, it must be admitted, was there a man the leading principles of whose character were more immovably fixed: these were the constant habit of watching over minutiae, and entire devotion to daily work. Such as he was when he entered on life, such as we saw him during the period of his unprecedented splendour, such he remained after his fall, in the clutch of poverty.

It was in this solitude, far from a Court spoiled by excessive kindness, that Napoleon conceived the boldest and most venturesome plan of his life: on February 26, 1815, he embarked for France.

There is no doubt that since the overthrow of the Empire his partisans, like the faithful supporters of every fallen *régime*, worked with more or less ardour to pave the way for the Emperor’s return.

It is most probable, and very natural, that Napoleon knew of these intrigues, and that from Elba he encouraged them in every way.

These plots were probably intended to be

⁸ ‘Correspondence of Napoleon I.,’ t. xxvii., p. 423, No. 21,530, September 6, 1814.

subordinated to the internal politics of France, and also to the concentration, in a place agreed upon beforehand, of an imposing body ready to cheer and acclaim the Emperor. But how far from this premeditated plan was Napoleon when he set sail from Elba, determined to land in France at any point, whether his devoted supporters expected him or not. Such an act of boldness could only spring from a chivalrous determination, or else it was the act of a madman 'coming,' as people said in Paris, 'to hand himself over to Louis XVIII., as a moth flies to a candle.'⁹

Napoleon was incapable of an absurd folly, but he had courage enough to attempt everything and face every danger rather than deliver himself over, bound hand and foot. He was informed that the French desired his return. Before trusting them, he wished to assure himself, without violence, by a simple appearance among them, of the truth of these rumours. In spite of every danger, he took this supreme resolution on the day when the undeniable bad faith of the signatories of the treaty of Fontainebleau authorized him to violate the treaty.

We would remind those who reproach Napoleon with having broken his sworn faith in quitting Elba, that in law a convention only holds good

⁹ Marmont, '*Mémoires*,' t. vii., p. 84.

if the two parties can, in case of necessity, be compelled to observe it. We may ask his accusers, What could Napoleon do when he found that the stipulations signed by the Powers were not respected by them? What tribunal was competent to judge between all the nations of Europe on one side, and Napoleon alone on the other?

That was exactly the question that the exile of Elba had to solve. The treaty of Fontainebleau, of April 11, 1814, between the Emperor Napoleon and Austria, Russia and Prussia, with England in the background,¹⁰ had only been executed by one of the contracting parties, Napoleon to wit.

In February, 1815, the clauses which were the essential basis of the Convention were still absolutely unfulfilled. The yearly sum of 2,000,000 francs (£80,000) was still unpaid to the Emperor;¹¹ the duchies of Parma, Placentia and Guastalla had not been made over to Maria-Louisa, nor had the sums stipulated for other members of the Imperial Family been paid.¹²

¹⁰ 'This treaty was ratified by the Plenipotentiaries of the Great Powers, with a reservation, however, on the part of Britain, which had never, directly or indirectly, acknowledged Napoleon as Emperor, and still declined to do so.'—Alison's 'History of Europe,' abridged edition, p. 534.—*Translator*.

¹¹ Walter Scott, 'Life of Napoleon Bonaparte,' vol. vii., p. 328.

¹² 'The formal treaty was signed on April 11, by which he renounced for himself and his descendants the empire of

There had been an even more radical violation of the treaty: the fundamental clause granting to Napoleon the sovereignty of the Island of Elba had been contemned and trampled under foot. The Allied Powers and Louis XVIII., terrified by the mere shadow of the man who had so often held them at his mercy, had resolved, without any care for their engagements, to seize Napoleon and transport him to an island in mid-ocean.

It is most important to observe this fact. Five months before Napoleon left Elba, the name of St. Helena had already been pronounced.

‘The commonest rumour at Vienna,’ says De Bausset, ‘was that Napoleon must be sent to St. Helena, as Elba was too near Italy.’¹³

‘The English newspapers,’ says the Duke of Rovigo,¹⁴ ‘were declaring that the Emperor ought to be removed to St. Helena, and those of Germany took up the cry. The Emperor received these papers at Elba.’

France and kingdom of Italy; but he retained the title of Emperor, with the Island of Elba erected into a principality for his residence; and an income of 2,500,000 francs (£100,000) from the revenues of the ceded countries, with 2,000,000 francs (£80,000) from that of France, besides an annuity of 1,000,000 francs (£40,000) for Joséphine. He was allowed to take with him 400 soldiers for his guard; and the duchies of Parma and Placentia were settled on Maria-Louisa and her son.’—Alison, pp. 533, 534.—*Translator*.

¹³ ‘Mémoires,’ t. iii., p. 56. ¹⁴ ‘Mémoires,’ t. vii., p. 333.

‘The other question,’ writes Villemain,¹⁵ ‘which was even more grave, and gave rise to more discussion, was the removal of Napoleon to some transatlantic island, such as St. Lucia, the Azores, or St. Helena, for this last name had already been breathed in secret conferences, whereof the knowledge came to Napoleon.’

‘Nothing was considered more urgent,’ said Count Pozzo di Borgo, one of the Plenipotentiaries of the Czar,¹⁶ ‘than to remove Napoleon from the eyes of Europe, and to transport him as quickly and as far as possible.’

On October 13, 1814, Talleyrand, in a report to Louis XVIII. of the sittings of the Congress of Vienna, says :

‘There appears to be here a strongly-rooted intention of removing Napoleon from the Island of Elba. Nobody has got any fixed idea as to a suitable place to put him into, and I have proposed one of the Azores. It is 500 leagues from any land, and Lord Castlereagh thinks that the Portuguese might be brought to agree to this arrangement.’¹⁷

This ‘arrangement,’ as Talleyrand calls it, seems to have smiled upon Louis XVIII., who, by return of courier, congratulates his Ambassador upon ‘his excellent suggestion of the Azores.’¹⁸

¹⁵ ‘Souvenirs Contemporains,’ t. ii., p. 75.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, t. ii., p. 76.

¹⁷ Talleyrand, ‘Mémoires,’ t. ii., p. 352.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

On December 7, in another letter so obscure as to make it difficult to discover whether assassination or transportation is intended, Talleyrand says without circumlocution :

‘ The conclusion I draw from this is, that we must hasten to get rid of the man of Elba. My opinion is gaining ground ; Count Münster warmly approves it. He has written about it to his Court, has mentioned it to Lord Castlereagh, and has warmed him to the pitch of going to excite Prince Metternich.’¹⁹

In this struggle, as unjust as it was unequal, between Napoleon and all the Powers united at Vienna, what was likely to be the state of Napoleon’s mind ?

To defend himself in Elba, to attempt to gain respect for his rights with a few hundred men and sixteen guns, against the whole of Europe, would be simply to court ridicule ; his only chance, therefore, lay in being able to defeat the plots that were hatching at Vienna, and if our readers will carefully follow the dates, they will be convinced that the Emperor’s determination only rested upon intelligence of his certain and immediate transfer to an island in the ocean.

‘ On February 19 Monsieur de Talleyrand announced to the King the decisions of the Con-

¹⁹ Talleyrand and Louis XVIII., ‘ Correspondance Inédite,’ published by G. Pallain, p. 171.

gress. The Emperor had been informed of them the previous evening by Messieurs Maret and Daru. Talleyrand's courier arrived in Paris at the same time as Lord Castlereagh, who came in person to assure Louis XVIII. that Napoleon would be deprived of all subsidies and sent away. That happened while Maret's courier was landing at the Island of Elba on the 24th, and on the 26th, at two in the afternoon, Napoleon gave orders to embark.²⁰

In choosing this means of escaping from the unworthy snare into which he had fallen, the Emperor, with admirable courage, proudly took France for the arbiter of his conduct—that France whence, less than a year before, he had been contemptuously ejected; that France which, since his exile, had tried a new form of Government. It was she of whom he demanded, loyally, voluntarily, that she should free him from his enemies, or defend him against them.

When ages have passed, and a Homer has written the story of this heroic adventure, men will feel as though they were reading a mythological poem. They will regard as a sort of Titan the man who, followed by about 1,000 soldiers, came to reconquer a country with 36,000,000 inhabitants, defended by a standing

²⁰ Jung, '*Mémoires de Lucien Bonaparte*,' t. iii., pp. 224, 225.

army of 225,000 men, and ruled by the monarch who boasted that he was the legitimate King. They will find it hard to believe that the Emperor, leaving his little troop behind him, advanced alone, his chest exposed, towards the guns that were pointed at him, and that he said, 'Here is your Emperor! Kill your old General!'²¹ that every weapon dropped, and that the soldiers sent to shoot him wept for joy, kissed his hands, grasped his followers in close embrace, and fell behind him to increase the escort of the prisoner who had escaped from Elba.

Men will fancy that they are reading a fairy-story when they learn that Napoleon traversed the length of France followed by the frantic acclamations of the very people who had lately stoned and reviled him, without firing a gun, without shedding a drop of blood, and that he entered the Tuileries while the King and his Court were fleeing in panic towards Belgium.

When Napoleon quitted Elba, had he any right to anticipate so extraordinary a result? Such a presumption would have come within the range of dreams, and the Emperor was nothing less than a dreamer. But in presence of the miserable end that he saw before him, of closing his days on a rock in the ocean, he no doubt

²¹ Fleury de Chaboulon, '*Mémoires*,' t. i., p. 122.

said to himself that, as he must die, he had better fall in the attempt to regain for his son, who, at any rate, was born a King, the throne that he desired to bequeath to him. He knew, too, that it was his only chance of recovering his domestic happiness, as success might restore to him wife and child.

Is not all this enough to explain why a man like Napoleon, bold, judicious, stoical, preferred to risk his life in one supreme effort, beyond which shone a gleam of hope, rather than to resign himself beforehand, and without a struggle against such a burial alive, to his inevitable removal to St. Helena?

Twenty days spent in a triumphant march to Paris, during which every minute brought to the Sovereign, who yesterday had been neglected and despised, proofs of inexpressible affection and tokens of delirious enthusiasm—twenty days sufficed to metamorphose the prisoner of Elba into the proud and happy Emperor who had recovered his throne, and who now, at any rate, held it by the spontaneous will of the people.

On March 20, 1815, on his return to the Tuileries, Napoleon immediately set to work with the same zeal as that which General Bonaparte had displayed sixteen years before, when he came from Saint-Cloud and took possession of the Luxembourg.

'After the first few moments of feeling,' says the Duke of Vicenza, 'the Emperor, with his customary activity, spent all night in sending out orders, reorganizing the Government service, and recomposing his Cabinet.'²²

'At eleven the same night,' says Count de Lavalette,²³ 'I found the Emperor surrounded by his former Ministers, discussing questions of government, as if we had gone back ten years.'

The Allied Powers, who, this time at least, could not say that Napoleon had declared war against them, soon set their armies in motion again.

Arms in hand, in the post given to him by the army and the nation, on the field of battle, Napoleon's career terminated, and he definitely resigned his leadership.

²² 'Souvenirs,' part i., t. ii., p. 139.

²³ 'Mémoires et Souvenirs,' t. ii., p. 163.

XI.

Old Historical Principles—The Great Fighter a Great Peacemaker—Moral and Material Results—The Future.

A RAPID glance at the Imperial reign will demonstrate that Napoleon, as a chief, was above all things a resolute worker, and that care to fulfil all the duties entrusted to him had for him the force of an instinct which he could not resist. Great points and small points stood, one may say, on the same level in his mind. They were not forgotten either in the joy of victory or the humiliation of defeat.

As a logical consequence of his temperament and the sensitiveness of his conscience, the most energetic and brilliant soldier in the army was also the most industrious and valuable citizen of the Empire.

In default of traditional claims to sovereignty, the Emperor was able to legitimize his presence on the throne by showing himself to be the worthiest, the most capable, the most hard-working of Frenchmen.

High as his destiny carried him, he never forgot that he was born for a life of labour and vicissitudes, and whereas his place would have been to many a mere opportunity for pleasure and idleness, he determined that he would also be the first in work. Each day saw him renewing those painful and incessant efforts which, in this world, are rather the lot of the disinherited than of the potentate.

This simple conduct, just because it is so simple, looks phenomenal to people who have formed another idea of the part to be played by a great statesman, and they have transformed into a sort of superhuman monster the man who combined in one brain the most transcendent genius and the most practical common-sense. Napoleon, however, in no respect differed from those representative men who have been the pioneers in all branches of human activity. Each of these men, in the exercise of his special gift, has set himself to realize the ideal of which he desires to be the patron, in the most exact acceptation of the word. The patron who devotes body and soul to the furtherance of his work, who lives, feels, thinks for it alone; the patron who night and day reviews in his mind the number of his tasks, and by this repetition classifies them and engraves them, framed by his memory, in a microscopic picture in which his eye, like a powerful magnify-

ing glass, can detect at once broad outlines and minute details ; the patron who, at one glance, sees clearly every defect in execution, from the extremities to the centre, and who, strong in his experience and his skill, is ever ready to give advice or assistance ; the patron, in short, who, by his untiring ardour, by his devotion to the general good, serves as a model and a stimulant to the zeal of all his fellow-workers.

By these substantial virtues—the appanage of the determined, sincere, and kindly man who has been revealed to us in all the aspects under which this study has presented him—Napoleon justified the claims of the popular movement which culminated in the Revolution, and which demanded access to all posts, even that of royalty, for the most worthy, without distinction of caste.

Napoleon, himself the personification of all the virtues of the middle class, set an example to all sons of this nineteenth century. He taught them how a man may transport with him his virtues from the lowest to the highest sphere ; how he may be a soldier and yet generalissimo of countless armies ; how, having reached the summit of the social hierarchy, he may, as well as the smallest clerk, be upright, honest, punctual and economical.

Everyone, great or small, can see for himself that Napoleon's office would not have sufficed to

secure for him the important place he occupies in the minds of mankind if he had not striven by his labours and his studies to render himself worthy of the rank to which he had attained.

They may also see that, far from lowering himself by his incessant toils, and his concern for the smallest details, Napoleon has attracted the admiration of the whole world, has compelled the noblest families to bow before him, and, by matrimonial alliances, has united his house to those of the most ancient European monarchs.

Thanks to this man, born a *bourgeois*, that class has taken a place in the affairs of State whence it has not since been driven. No one can seriously affirm that, if the Restoration had immediately followed the Directory, even one of the former authorities would have remained in power. Nevertheless, the spectre of the Emperor was sufficient to frighten Louis XVIII. at Saint-Ouen, and to oblige him to sign the contract whereon rests our whole governmental organization of to-day. What is yet more strange is that this great warrior was, after all, a great peacemaker.

Though during his lifetime Napoleon lost all he had gained, splendour, happiness and fortune, yet those who worked under his rule preserved for themselves and their descendants the advan-

tages he had secured to them. Titles of nobility, of royalty, of empire, all subsist. The Order that he created is still coveted by every Frenchman, and the Head of the State is still proud to be able to call himself Grand-Master of the Legion of Honour, although men have long since lost all recollection of distinctions formerly conferred by Kings.

Before his time France had been torn by civil war ; Royalists, Terrorists, and so on, were names that spread hatred in men's hearts. After his reign, if the parties, although much reduced, continued to exist, they nevertheless formed, when necessary, a compact nation, strong and proud, welded together by the moral force of patriotism, which overrules all dissensions. This strength, purchased at the cost of blood shed in common, constitutes the sacred inheritance round which Frenchmen may gather in brotherly unity.

And besides the moral result, already immense, there is the material result. On this side the labours of Napoleon have been far from fruitless. Let us judge. Following the financial upheaval of the Revolution, which had inherited the deficit left by royalty, we know what, when the Consulate was formed, was the position of France—one of actual bankruptcy, leaving unpaid 66 per cent. of her debts, and reduced to 'lay hands on

the receipts of the Opera ¹ to send a courier to the army. Contrast this deplorable condition with the state of things left behind him by Napoleon.

We must further notice that he was perhaps the only Sovereign who never contracted a loan. Even after ten years of constant warfare, after maintaining huge armies all over the world, he left France the richest nation in the universe, and in possession of a larger amount of specie than the rest of Europe.²

*Kept France
out of debt*

If we take his last complete budget, that of 1813, we shall find it perfectly balanced, with receipts amounting to 1,000,260,000 francs (£40,010,400).³

Moreover, Napoleon, and we may say France, for this sum was spent in 1814, possessed an available reserve of 407,000,000 francs (£16,280,000) under the heading 'Imperial Treasure'.⁴

This large sum was due not only to the tribute exacted from conquered nations, but also to the exaggerated supervision, often considered unworthy of a Sovereign, that Napoleon had always exercised over his household expenses.

'Out of about 25,500,000 francs (£1,020,000) that were granted for his civil list, 13,000,000

¹ H. Taine, 'Origines de la France Contemporaines,' 'La Régime Moderne,' t. i., p. 127.

² Baron Fain, 'Manuscrit de 1813,' t. i., p. 75.

³ Mollien, 'Mémoires,' t. iii., p. 205.

⁴ *Ibid.*

or 14,000,000 (£560,000) sufficed annually, the rest being put aside as a reserve fund every year.⁵

Finally, the Emperor left France endowed with a large number of useful or artistic works executed during his reign. Upon these matters he had spent no less than '30,000,000 francs (£1,200,000) upon bridges, 54,000,000 (£2,160,000) upon canals, 77,000,000 (£3,080,000) upon roads, 100,000,000 (£4,000,000) upon ports and harbours, and more than 150,000,000 (£6,000,000) for the enrichment of Museums and Imperial residences.'⁶

Before these excellent results, obtained by the will of one man, who sprang from humble obscurity, with no other appliances or aids than his inherent virtues, order, economy, and industry, one feels stronger, more hopeful of the future.

If ever, which God forbid, new sorrows should come to afflict and oppress our country, if she should be attacked on all sides by the enemy, if she should be, at the same time, disorganized and rent by internal dissensions, France may still centre her hopes on the thought that there may be among those plain, hard-working officers who wear their swords with unostentatious pride one

⁵ De Ségur, 'Mémoires,' t. ii., p. 305.

⁶ Baron Fain, 'Manuscrit de 1813,' t. ii., pp. 79, 89.

destined by Providence to say to his beloved country what Themistocles said to the Athenians :

‘In truth, I can neither tune a lyre nor play a psaltery, but give me a small and obscure town, and it shall soon acquire renown and splendour.’

THE END.



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